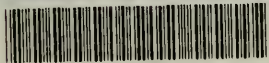


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“The House of Glass”

A Drama in Four Acts

BY

Max Marcin

and

George M. Cohan

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PS 3525
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no 1.

“The House of Glass”

ACT I.

SCENE: A room in MRS. BRANDT'S New York boarding house.

At rise of curtain the stage is bare. After a few seconds NELLIE enters, carrying a couple of bundles.

NELLIE

(Goes over to table L. and starts counting the bundles scattered around the room.)

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. Gosh! I didn't think they was that many bundles in the world.

(She sees a hat in box on chair R. C., takes it out, goes to dresser R. and tries it on. She stands admiring herself in mirror as MARGARET CASE enters.)

MARGARET

(Enters from R., sees NELLIE and laughs.)

It looks very pretty, Nellie.

NELLIE

(Hurriedly removes the hat.)

Oh, excuse me, Miss Case.

MARGARET

(Crosses to L.)

That's all right, Nellie; I don't blame you for liking pretty things. You're forgiven.

NELLIE

Thanks, Miss Case.

MARGARET

(Takes the hat from NELLIE.)

I'll take it. You run down and tell Mrs. Brandt I want to see her.

NELLIE

Yes, Miss Case.

(Exists R.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MARGARET

(Goes L., changing her waist to a kimono, then busying herself with the bundles, singing light-heartedly during business.)

(A knock comes on door R.)

Who is it?

MRS. BRANDT

(Enters from R.)

It's me, dearie.

MARGARET

Oh, come in, Mrs. Brandt.

MRS. BRANDT

(As she comes toward C.)

Nellie said you told her you wanted to see me.

MARGARET

(Over L.)

Yes, I want to know if you'll have that trunk of mine brought up from the cellar.

MRS. BRANDT

(R. C.)

A trunk?

MARGARET

Yes, you remember; the trunk I had put down there when I first came here last August.

MRS. BRANDT

Oh, yes.

(A slight pause.)

You're not going away, dearie?

(Crosses to bed over L.)

MARGARET

(Busying herself around room.)

Yes, tomorrow, and I've such a frightful lot of packing to do, I don't really know where to begin.

MRS. BRANDT

And why are you moving, dearie? Did somebody say something to hurt your feelings or something?

MARGARET

Oh no, Mrs. Brandt, it's nothing like that. Everyone has been more than kind to me in this house, and you especially.

(*Goes L. to MRS. BRANDT.*)

I'm really sorry to leave.

MRS. BRANDT

(*Sits on foot of bed.*)

But you must have some reason for going.

MARGARET

I have—the best reason in the world—but I can't tell you what it is because I've promised not to.

(*Crosses to C.*)

MRS. BRANDT

And do you think that fair to me, dearie?

MARGARET

What?

MRS. BRANDT

Giving up your room without telling me why? What'll the other boarders think? They'll ask me why you moved, and what'll I say?

MARGARET

I'm not what you call "moving." I'm leaving the city.

MRS. BRANDT

You mean you're going away from New York?

MARGARET

Yes, I'm going way out West; way off to San Francisco.

MRS. BRANDT

San Francisco! Why have you got some folks out there?

MARGARET

(*R. C.*)

No, I don't know a soul in the town.

(*All during this she is busy opening bundles, etc.*)

MRS. BRANDT

Well, there must be some attraction to take you so far away.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MARGARET

(Laughs.)

Oh, there are attractions all right. I told you I had a very good reason for going. Now, don't ask me any more questions, Mrs. Brandt, because I really can't tell you anything about it.

(Facetiously.)

It's a dark secret.

(Changing tone.)

You will see about the trunk, won't you?

MRS. BRANDT

Oh, the trunk! Yes, yes, I forgot.

(Goes to door R. and calls.)

Nellie!

(Calls again, as she gets no reply.)

Nellie!

NELLIE

(From downstairs off R.)

Yes, Mrs. Brandt.

MRS. BRANDT

Tell Frank to go down in the cellar and get that trunk that belongs to Miss Case. Tell him to fetch it up here to her room. Do you understand?

NELLIE

(Off stage R.)

Miss Case's trunk?

MRS. BRANDT

Yes, up here to her room. Tell Frank.

NELLIE

(Off stage R.)

All right.

MRS. BRANDT

(Closes the door and crosses toward L.)

They'll all be wondering why you're leaving.

MARGARET

(Comes downstage with money in her hand.)

Hold out your hand.

MRS. BRANDT

Eh?

MARGARET

I'm going to give you something.

MRS. BRANDT

Me?

MARGARET

Yes. Come on, your hand.

(MARGARET counts bills into MRS. BRANDT'S outstretched hand.)

Five, ten, fifteen, twenty. There!

MRS. BRANDT

(Wonderingly.)

What's all this for, dearie?

MARGARET

That's for you.

MRS. BRANDT

(C.)

Why, you only owe me for one week, and that ain't due till Saturday.

MARGARET

(C.)

But I want you to buy a little present for yourself; something to remember me by when I'm gone.

MRS. BRANDT

Oh dearie, this is too much.

MARGARET

(Goes R. C.)

Now you're convinced that I'm not leaving here because I'm in any way dissatisfied, aren't you?

MRS. BRANDT

(L. C.)

But, dearie, how can you afford to do all this?

MARGARET

That's part of the dark secret I've promised not to divulge.

MRS. BRANDT

Well, honest, dearie, I don't know what to say.

MARGARET

I'm glad you don't. I don't want to hear another word about it.
(*Looks around room.*)

(MRS. BRANDT *picks up a lace shawl from foot of bed and stands examining it.*)

(MARGARET *turns and sees her.*)

That's real lace, Mrs. Brandt.

MRS. BRANDT

I thought so. A present from someone?

MARGARET

No, I bought it myself. Pretty, isn't it?

MRS. BRANDT

I should say so.

MARGARET

Oh, I have heaps of pretty things if I had the time to undo all the bundles and show them to you.

(*Goes L., gets coat and puts it on.*)

How do you like my little suit?

(*Turns around for MRS. BRANDT'S inspection.*)

MRS. BRANDT

It's very becoming, dearie.

MARGARET

Ready-made. I thought it would be rather nice to travel in.
Fits well, doesn't it?

MRS. BRANDT

Perfect.

MARGARET

(*Goes R., gets a box, takes it to bed and opens it.*)

Here's a little dress I bought yesterday. I'm just mad about it.
Awfully good taste, don't you think?

(*Brings the dress down to R. of bed and holds it out for MRS. BRANDT to see.*)

MRS. BRANDT

(Admiringly.)

Beautiful! All those things must have cost you an awful lot of money, dearie.

MARGARET

(R. C.)

All I had.

MRS. BRANDT

All you had!

MARGARET

(C.)

Every penny. It took me years to save it and just two days to spend it. The twenty dollars I gave you was the last of my little fortune. I didn't do so bad, though. I saved over seven hundred dollars in less than three years, and that's pretty good for an eighteen dollar a week stenographer. Don't you think so?

MRS. BRANDT

(Crosses to C.)

Margaret Case, do you mean to tell me that all the money you've saved you've spent in the last two days?

MARGARET

But money is a thing I'll never need again; don't you understand?

(Crosses toward C.)

MRS. BRANDT

(C.)

No, I don't understand.

MARGARET

(Laughs.)

Of course you don't, because that's part of my secret. Now don't try to guess, because you couldn't in a hundred years.

(Comes downstage L. C.)

MRS. BRANDT

Well, of course, I don't know what it's all about, dearie, but I hope that wherever you go, or whatever you do, that you'll be happy.

(Takes MARGARET's hands.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MARGARET

Thanks, Mrs. Brandt.

(Warn Bell R.)

MRS. BRANDT

(As she touches her lips to MARGARET'S hands she sees an engagement ring on her left hand.)

What's this, dearie, a diamond?

MARGARET

Yes; it's a beauty, isn't it?

MRS. BRANDT

I should say so. And did you buy this, too, dearie.

MARGARET

(Smiles.)

No, I won't tell you a story—that's a present.

MRS. BRANDT

A present? Well, well! A present, eh?

(Holds MARGARET'S hand, admiring the ring.)

MARGARET

Yes. Now don't ask me, because I won't tell you.

MRS. BRANDT

Tell me what, dearie?

MARGARET

Who gave it to me.

MRS. BRANDT

I wasn't going to ask that.

MARGARET

Now, Mrs. Brandt!

*(Both laugh.)**(Door-bell downstairs rings on business of laugh.)*

MRS. BRANDT

(Crosses to R.)

There's someone at the front door.

MARGARET

More packages for me, I dare say. I bought some things this morning.

(Goes upstage C.)

MRS. BRANDT

What time do you leave tomorrow, dearie?

MARGARET

On the 20th Century. We're going to stop over in Chicago for a few days before we start for the Coast.

MRS. BRANDT

Oh, then you're not going alone?

MARGARET

What?

MRS. BRANDT

You said "we," so I suppose someone's going with you.

MARGARET

Oh, yes.

(Confused.)

Yes, a friend of mine.

MRS. BRANDT

(Knowingly.)

Oh, I see!

(As knock comes on door R.)

Come in.

(Knock R.)

FRANK

(Enters, dragging a trunk.)

Did you say you wanted this trunk here in this room here?

MRS. BRANDT

Yes, bring it right in, Frank.

FRANK

(Drags the trunk in.)

Where'll I put it?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MARGARET

Leave it right there. I'm going to send it to the station as soon as I've packed.

(FRANK places trunk down R. C. and unstraps it.)

(Knock.)

NELLIE

(Knocks on door R.)

(The door is open.)

Oh, Miss Case.

MARGARET

Yes, come in.

NELLIE

(Enters and stands inside door.)

MRS. BRANDT

What do you want, Nellie?

NELLIE

There's someone downstairs to see Miss Case.

MARGARET

Some one to see me?

NELLIE

Yes, Mr. Burke.

MRS. BRANDT

Mr. Burke?

MARGARET

(To MRS. BRANDT:)

Yes, you remember; I introduced him to you on the steps the night before last.

MRS. BRANDT

Oh, you mean the young man that called for you in a taxi-cab?

MARGARET

He's the one.

(Has taken money from dresser, and comes downstage and hands it to FRANK.)

Here you are, Frank.

(Hands money to FRANK, then turns to NELLIE.)

Tell him I'll be right down, Nellie.

NELLIE

Yes, ma'am.

(*Exits R., followed by FRANK.*)

MARGARET

(*Runs up to mirror in dresser R., and starts arranging her hair.*)

My, I look a sight! If I'd known I was going to have company I wouldn't have changed to this kimona.

MRS. BRANDT

Why do you bother about going downstairs, dearie? Why don't you have him come up here?

MARGARET

Oh, that wouldn't look very nice, would it?

MRS. BRANDT

(*Over R., near door.*)

Why, he's a respectable young man, isn't he?

MARGARET

(*L.*)

He surely is.

MRS. BRANDT

Then don't be silly. I'll tell Nellie to bring him up.

MARGARET

Do you think it will look all right?

MRS. BRANDT

Why, of course, dearie. The idea!

(*Goes to door R. and calls.*)

Nellie! Nellie!

NELLIE

(*Offstage R.*)

Yes, Mrs. Brandt.

MRS. BRANDT

Show Mr. Burke upstairs here to Miss Case's room, do you understand?

NELLIE

Up to Miss Case's room?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MRS. BRANDT

Yes. Show Mr. Burke right up.

NELLIE

All right. Yes ma'am.

MRS. BRANDT

(Closes the door and turns to MARGARET.)

Now, if I can help you pack these things I'd love to do it, dearie.

MARGARET

(Over L., changing her kimona for a waist.)

You'll find the key in the top drawer, left hand side.

(Points to dresser R.)

MRS. BRANDT

(Opens drawer in dresser, finds the key, then comes down R.)

Who is this Mr. Burke, dearie? One of your old friends, I suppose.

(Unlocks the trunk.)

MARGARET

(L.)

Well, no, not exactly an old friend, but a very dear friend.

MRS. BRANDT

Oh, I see. I was going to say I don't remember of having seen him till you introduced him to me on the steps. In fact, I don't know as I remember of any young man ever calling on you before. I remarked that to Nellie right after you drove away in the taxi the other night.

MARGARET

(Comes to C.)

That's strange. You know, I was wondering what you thought.

MRS. BRANDT

Were you really, dearie?

MARGARET

Honestly.

(Knocks comes on door R.)

(Knock.)

Come in.

NELLIE

(Enters from R.)

Here's Mr. Burke.

(BURKE enters, following NELLIE.)

MARGARET

Oh, come right in, Jimmy.

BURKE

(Enters and stands below door, looking a bit embarrassed as he sees MRS. BRANDT.)

MARGARET

(To BURKE.)

You've met Mrs. Brandt.

MRS. BRANDT

How do you do, Mr. Burke.

BURKE

(Smiles.)

Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Brandt. I think I had the pleasure the other evening.

(Crosses to C. NELLIE exits R.)

MRS. BRANDT

(Smiles.)

That's right.

BURKE

(As he goes up C., looking around the room.)

Great Scott! What a busy young lady you are.

MARGARET

(L.)

Now no remarks about the room. I know it looks terrible, but don't remind me, please.

MRS. BRANDT

Well, I suppose Mr. Burke wants to talk to you privately, dearie, so I'll run downstairs.

MARGARET

(Crosses BURKE to R.)

Oh no, don't go, Mrs. Brandt.

BURKE

(*C. as MARGARET crosses him, he gives her a warning tap on the shoulder, intimating that he wants to be left alone with her.*)

No, don't hurry away on my account, please.

MRS. BRANDT

Oh, I must go, really, I've got so much to do before dinner.

(*To MARGARET.*)

Now, if you think Nellie and I can help any with the packing, dearie, just call and we'll both come up.

MARGARET

(*Up C.*)

Thank you so much, Mrs. Brandt.

MRS. BRANDT

Thank you, dearie, for the present. Goodbye, Mr. Burke.

BURKE

Goodbye, Mrs. Brandt.

MRS. BRANDT

She's a fine girl, Mr. Burke. You're certainly not making any mistake; and from the looks of you, I don't think she is either.

MARGARET

What!

(*BURKE and MARGARET look at each other, astonished.*)

MRS. BRANDT

(*Turns to door.*)

Oh, she didn't tell me anything—I guessed it. I can see it in your eyes—both of you. Oh, you can't fool me.

(*Exits R., laughing.*)

BURKE

(*Turns to MARGARET, who comes down C. to him.*)

What's all that about?

MARGARET

I don't know. You heard what she said.

BURKE

You didn't tell her?

MARGARET

(R. C.)

Not a word. She drew her own conclusions, that's all.

(Over to BURKE.)

Don't you believe me?

BURKE

You know I do.

(Takes her in his arms and kisses her.)

You sweet kid.

MARGARET

Don't, Jimmy, please.

(Moves away from him.)

Some one might come in.

BURKE

Well, what of it? You belong to me, don't you?

MARGARET

Not yet.

BURKE

But you will in a few days. When you get on that train in Chicago next Saturday you'll be Mrs. James Burke. How does that sound, eh? Mrs. James Burke.

(Kisses her.)

MARGARET

Oh, Jimmy, I don't see why we can't be married here. Why do we have to wait until we get to Chicago?

BURKE

(L. C.)

Now don't make me go over that again. I told you that on account of family reasons I don't want our marriage to become public right now. And that's just what will happen if we're married here in New York. Now don't be unreasonable, Margaret. I wouldn't ask you to wait if I didn't think it was for the best. Don't you suppose I'm as anxious as you are?

MARGARET

Of course. I'm just silly, that's all. There, I shant mention it again—cross my heart.

(Suits action to last words, then goes up to dresser, takes things from it and comes down to trunk with them.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

BURKE

(Goes up C., then downstage L.)

I suppose the old lady asked you a million questions about where you were going and why you were going, etcetera, and so on.

(Down L.)

MARGARET

(Brings hat down to trunk.)

Yes, Lord, you should have heard her. And, my dear, you should have seen her face when she spied my engagement ring.

BURKE

(Over to her R. of trunk.)

Have you got it on?

MARGARET

(Holds out her hand.)

Yes. See, here it is.

BURKE

You promised me you wouldn't wear that until we were married.

MARGARET

I know, Jimmy, but that's such a childish idea. Why shouldn't I wear my engagement ring when I'm engaged.

BURKE

(C.)

Because I asked you not to. I told you I was superstitious about engagement rings, didn't I?

MARGARET

(Crosses to C.)

Oh, I know, but that's all so foolish. Now, what harm can——

BURKE

(Interrupting her.)

Margaret, you promised me you wouldn't wear it, and I want you to take it off.

MARGARET

(R. C.)

Oh, very well, have your own way. But honestly, Jimmy, I think such superstitions are perfectly absurd.

(Takes the ring from her finger.)

There, it's off.

(Puts the ring in pocket of her blouse.)

I shant wear it again until we're married.

BURKE

Cross your heart?

(She crosses her heart.)

Now kiss me.

(Throws his arms about her.)

MARGARET

(Draws away from him.)

No, sir, not till we're married.

BURKE

What!

MARGARET

I'm superstitious.

BURKE

(Pulls her to him.)

Come here.

(Kisses her.)

MARGARET

Please, Jimmy, let me go. I've a week's work to do before these things are packed.

(Draws away from him and goes up to dresser.)

Take that tray out of the trunk, Jimmy, and keep out of mischief.

BURKE

(Goes to trunk and lifts top tray off.)

Where shall I put it?

MARGARET

On the bed.

BURKE

(Puts the tray on the bed, then comes C., looking about the room.)

I'll bet you'll be mighty glad to get out of this dingy two by four, won't you?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MARGARET

(As she comes down to trunk with an armful of clothes.)

This isn't dingy, and don't you dare say anything of the kind. I've been very happy in this two by four, as you call it. You needn't come around here finding fault and showing off. You know you weren't always rich.

BURKE

No, that's right, a lot can happen in a short time.

(Sits on table L.)

Gee! Just think! Two weeks ago I was driving a car—a chauffeur—thirty a week.

MARGARET

And I was pounding a typewriter for eighteen, and we hadn't even met—hadn't even heard of each other.

BURKE

(As he goes toward C.)

It's a funny old world.

MARGARET

(Kneeling in front of trunk.)

Isn't it? You know, Jimmy, our affair is just like a story in a book.

BURKE

(Sits on edge of trunk.)

That's right, it's a real romance. Poor boy—poor girl—meet—fall in love—uncle dies and leaves poor boy a hundred thousand dollars—boy and girl become engaged and start for the West to be married—and live happy ever after. It is like a story book, isn't it?

MARGARET

And just think, the whole thing's happened inside of two weeks. Isn't it wonderful?

BURKE

Wonderful!

(Takes her in his arms and kisses her.)

MARGARET

(Breaks away from him, laughing.)

Oh, get away from here, Jimmy, I'll never get my packing done.
(Continues packing things in trunk.)

BURKE

(Goes over L., stands watching MARGARET a moment, then taking a jewel case from his pocket. He looks at it, then over at MARGARET, who is busy at trunk. He replaces the case in his pocket before he speaks.)

Margaret.

MARGARET

What?

BURKE

Is that door locked?

(Indicates R. door with a nod of his head.)

MARGARET

No.

BURKE

Lock it, will you?

MARGARET

Why?

BURKE

I want to show you something.

(Goes upstage and looks out of window R., then comes down stage to C.)

MARGARET

(Rises, goes R. and locks the door, then comes C.)

What is it?

BURKE

(Opens the jewel case and shows it to her.)

What do you think of that?

MARGARET

Oh, Jimmy, that's gorgeous! Where on earth did you ever get such marvelous jewels?

BURKE

'Sh.' Not so loud.

(R. C.)

MARGARET

(L. C.)

What's the matter?

BURKE

Nothing. It's all right, only don't talk so loud. I bought this at a real bargain from one of the biggest jewelers in town. He's afraid to handle it. There's over fifty thousand dollars' worth of stuff in that necklace. I got it for ten. I bought it for you. Isn't it a dream?

(MARGARET places it around her neck. As she starts to fasten the clasp, he takes it from her.)

Of course, it's got to be broken up before any of it's worn, on account of being smuggled in here.

MARGARET

Smuggled!

BURKE

Yes; just one of the ways of avoiding duty at this port. It's nothing to worry about. It's perfectly legitimate—done every day. Some stuff there, eh, kid?

MARGARET

But smuggled! I don't like that idea, Jimmy.

BURKE

Well, don't blame me, I didn't smuggle them. Neither did the fellow that sold them to me. He isn't even sure they were smuggled, but he advises that in case of such a thing, it's just as well not to flash them in this setting, so just hide it away and when we're West a few days we'll have the stuff loosened and re-set.

(As MARGARET still looks unconvinced.)

It's all right. You don't suppose I'd take a chance if I wasn't sure, do you?

(He hands her the necklace. She starts up toward the dresser with it.)

Put it away—in the trunk.

(She comes down to trunk with it.)

(BURKE gets lace shawl from foot of bed.)

Here, let's wrap it in this.

MARGARET

Wait, Jimmy, that's real lace. That cost a lot of money.

BURKE

Well, it's in good company.

(As he wraps the case in the shawl.)

Here you are—family jewels for your children when they grow up.

(Hands the case to her.)

MARGARET

Jimmy!

(She puts the package in the trunk.)

BURKE

Here—in the trunk—way at the bottom. That's the idea.

(He tries to kiss her. She draws away laughingly.)

(Knock comes on door R.)

MARGARET

(Busy packing.)

Come in.

BURKE

(Has gone C. at knock.)

The door's locked.

MARGARET

That's so.

(Calls.)

All right, just a minute.

(Goes to door, unlocks it and opens it.)

NELLIE

(Enters from R.)

There's two men downstairs to see you, Miss Case.

MARGARET

Two men to see me?

BURKE

Who are they?

NELLIE

They didn't say what their names was. They said they was friends of Mr. Burke.

(MARGARET looks at BURKE.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

BURKE

Friends of mine? That's funny.

MARGARET

Shall we have them come up?

BURKE

No, no.

(Nervously.)

I'll go down and see who they are.

(Starts for door as CARROLL and CROWLEY enter from R.)

CARROLL

(As he enters from R.)

Don't trouble yourself, sweetheart. We came up to save you the trouble of coming down.

(Comes to R. C., followed by NELLIE. CROWLEY is R. of her.)

(CARROLL turns to NELLIE.)

That's all, kid. Run downstairs and wash your face, and I'll kiss you good-bye as I'm going out.

NELLIE

Say, who do you think you're talking to?

CARROLL

(Turns to CROWLEY.)

Say something sweet to the little child, Crowley.

CROWLEY

Get out of here before I murder you.

(Takes her by the arm and shoves her out of room, then locks the door and puts the key in his pocket and comes downstage R.)

CARROLL

(Has gone upstage R. above trunk.)

Hello, Burke, that was a damn good job you did at the Whitney home a week ago last Thursday. You must have hauled down about eighty or ninety thousand dollars, didn't you?

(A pause of several seconds, while BURKE looks at CARROLL, and MARGARET looks at BURKE. CARROLL stands staring at BURKE.)

MARGARET

(After a pause.)

Who are these men, Jimmy?

BURKE

(Dazed.)

I don't know.

MARGARET

(Goes to CARROLL.)

What does this mean?

CARROLL

Now, now, nix on the melodramatic stuff. If you start to Leslie Carter yourself with me I'll have Crowley hiss you. Show her how you can hiss, Crowley.

(CROWLEY hisses.)

See, we're a hard audience. Can the acting.

(BURKE has turned from CARROLL during this dialogue and is now reaching into his hip pocket for his gun.)

Crowley, see what that guy's got on his hip.

CROWLEY

(Pulls his gun and levels it at BURKE.)

Get away from there.

(Crosses to BURKE over L.)

BURKE

(Draws gun slowly from his pocket and hands it to CROWLEY.)

I was only going to hand it to you.

CROWLEY

(As he takes the gun and puts it in his pocket.)

Gee, you're polite.

CARROLL

See if he's got another one, Crowley; he's liable to take an encore.

CROWLEY

(Searches BURKE's pockets.)

Clean as Childs' Restaurant.

CARROLL

Put the Houdini's on him.

(CROWLEY handcuffs BURKE.)

See what kind of literature he carries.

(CROWLEY searches BURKE's pockets and finds transportation tickets.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MARGARET

(Has been standing C. She now turns to CARROLL.)

This is an outrage. I demand an explanation.

CARROLL

(CROWLEY turns toward her and hisses.)

No, no; small town coppers might fall for that stuff, but it won't get you anything in the big cities.

CROWLEY

(Coming C.)

Transportation to Chicago, and two lower berths on the 20th Century tomorrow.

*(Puts the tickets in his pockets.)**(Warn patrol wagon bell.)*

CARROLL

20th Century, eh? He's a piker. A regular crook would have a special train if he made a haul like that guy.

MARGARET

(Makes a dash for door R. and finds it locked)

CROWLEY

(As he sees MARGARET running to door.)

Pipe the bust-away.

MARGARET

Who locked this door?

CARROLL

(To MARGARET.)

I don't know.

(Turns to CROWLEY.)

Who locked that door?

CROWLEY

I don't know who locked that door?

MARGARET

(Crosses to R. of BURKE.)

Jimmy, what does this all mean? Why don't you tell me what all means?

BURKE

(Stands below L. table.)

You can guess, can't you? They've got me, that's all. There's nothing I can say except that I'm sorry, not for myself, but for you.

(Bows his head while reading above lines.)

(Patrol bell is heard off stage.)

MARGARET

(As she hears the patrol wagon bell she rushes up to the window R., looks out, turns, comes downstage a few steps, then, as a full realization of the thing comes to her, she throws out her arms and falls in a dead faint up C.)

(As she falls BURKE starts toward her, but is stopped by CROWLEY.)

CROWLEY

(Waves BURKE back.)

Just a minute, just a minute.

(To MARGARET, as he stands L. of her.)

Come along now, kid—come on, cut out the comedy. We can't stay here all day.

(Kneels down and looks closely at her, then looks up at CARROLL, who is R. of MARGARET.)

She acts to me like she's on the square.

CARROLL

Behave yourself. Take a peek around.

(CROWLEY saunters around stage looking at things and watching BURKE.)

(To MARGARET.)

Come on, act like a regular and get up on your feet. That kind of stuff isn't going to get you anything with me.

BURKE

(Blurts out.)

For God's sake be human. Can't you see the girl has fainted?

CARROLL

(Kneels down and looks closely at her.)

By God, you're right. I'm damned if she didn't fool me. I thought she was acting.

(Rises.)

CROWLEY

I told you she was on the square.

CARROLL

Call one of the women.

(CROWLEY *exits R.*)

(BURKE *kneels L. of MARGARET.*)

Who is this girl, Burke?

BURKE

Her name is Case.

CARROLL

I know that, but where is she from?

BURKE

You've looked her up, haven't you. You must have been trailing us?

CARROLL

I can't find any record of her at headquarters.

BURKE

She's not a crook.

CARROLL

She travels with you.

BURKE

She didn't know I was a crook.

CARROLL

How long have you known her.

BURKE

(*Rises.*)

Two weeks. I was going to marry this girl and go straight, so help me God, Carroll.

CARROLL

(*R. C.*)

You could afford to go straight with the haul you made. It's the best house-breaking job that's been pulled in five years. We'd never got you if you hadn't blown your chauffeur's job the same day she blew her job and started to pal together and do the town. At that, we weren't sure till today. What'd you get, on the level?

BURKE

About seventy thousand.

CARROLL

And about twenty thousand in cash.

BURKE

That's right.

CARROLL

Did you think you'd make it clean?

BURKE

Up to the minute you walked in that door.

CARROLL

We've had you for four days. I'm sorry, Burke.

(BURKE rises.)

BURKE

(Comes down to R. of table L.)

Oh, I don't care a damn now, but for God's sake don't hang anything on her.

CARROLL

Not a chance, if she's on the level. If you make a clean slate I'll go the limit for her.

BURKE

Thanks.

CROWLEY

(Enters from R. carrying a flask of brandy. He is followed by a Policeman, who stands near door R.)

(As he goes up stage C.)

The old dame fainted, too, when she saw those brass buttons.

(As he and CARROLL kneel beside MARGARET.)

Can you beat that! There wasn't a drop of booze in the house.

CARROLL

Where'd you get the flask?

CROWLEY

From the copper. Here we are. Take a drop of this; it will do you good.

(He and CARROLL try to force some of the liquor down MARGARET'S mouth. After several unsuccessful efforts.)

This is something worse than a faint, Carroll. Better get this girl to a hospital in a hurry.

(CROWLEY and CARROLL rise.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

CARROLL

Tell Bailey to pull up at the Polyclinic on the way.

(Turns to the Policeman at R. door.)

Mac, take her downstairs and put her in the wagon.

(CARROLL and CROWLEY lift MARGARET into the Policeman's arms. The latter carries her off stage R.)

(After a pause.)

Come on, Burke.

BURKE

Are you going to be on the level with the girl?

CARROLL

If she's clean and doesn't try to cross me. I'll go thro' for her.

BURKE

(A slight pause.)

There's a plant in that trunk.

CARROLL

(Looks at the trunk, then turns to CROWLEY.)

You take him and lock him up, Crowley. I'll stay here and keep an eye on this trunk. Send the wagon back in ten minutes to have it brought to headquarters, understand?

CROWLEY

I got you. Come on, Burke.

(Exit R., following BURKE.)

CARROLL

(Searches in the trunk and finds the jewel case. He opens it, takes out the necklace, and stands looking at it.)

Fifty thousand! And there's a lot of poor guys dying for the want of a ham sandwich.

(Patrol wagon bell heard off stage as curtain falls.)

CURTAIN

“The House of Glass”

ACT II.

SCENE: *At rise of curtain the stage is bare.*

(Bell rings off stage left.)

(WATSON, the butler, enters from R., crosses stage and exits L.)

(HARVEY LAKE enters at head of stairs and comes slowly down. As he gets to C. upstage, WATSON enters from L., followed by McCLELLAN and ATWOOD.)

WATSON

(As he enters.)

The two gentlemen you said you expected, Mr. Lake.

LAKE

(Extending hand to MAC.)

Oh, how do you do, Mr. McClellan?

McCLELLAN

(Shakes hands with LAKE.)

How are you, Lake?

(Introduces ATWOOD.)

Mr. Judson Atwood, Mr. Lake.

LAKE

(Crosses MAC to ATWOOD.)

This is indeed an honor, Mr. Atwood.

(The two men shake hands.)

ATWOOD

Mr. Lake, I've been very anxious to meet you, and am glad of this opportunity.

LAKE

(Smiles.)

Won't you sit down?

(Indicates chairs to both men.)

ATWOOD

Thank you.

(Sits below table L. and a little to the left.)

(McCLELLAN sits R. of desk.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

Oh, Watson, let's have a little more light.

WATSON

Yes, sir.

(*Turns on lights.*)

LAKE

(*To MAC and ATWOOD.*)

How about a little cocktail before dinner?

ATWOOD

(*Good-naturedly.*)

I don't mind.

McCLELLAN

I'd be very glad to get it.

LAKE

Any preference?

McCLELLAN

Watson's cocktails are all right.

LAKE

Serve them in here, Watson.

WATSON

Very good, sir.

(*Exits R.*)

LAKE

(*To ATWOOD, as he sits above his desk.*)

Mr. McClellan tells me you're on your way back East from the Coast.

ATWOOD

Yes. I fully intended to stop over on my way West, but my business out there was rather urgent, so I wired McClellan to come on and see you and that I'd join him on my way back.

LAKE

I see.

McCLELLAN

(To LAKE.)

I've told Mr. Atwood about the several little talks we had on the subject.

ATWOOD

(To LAKE.)

I understand you're not very keen about going to New York.

LAKE

New York? Oh, there's magic in the name; but of course, there's a great deal for me to consider before entertaining the proposition, Mr. Atwood. It isn't that I don't realize what a wonderful advancement it would mean to me to go over to the New York and Great Western, but there is a certain sentiment attached to my present position here with the Missouri Central. You see, I've sort of grown up with this railroad. I began as assistant freight agent when I was 19 years old. That's twenty years ago.

McCLELLAN

It wasn't much of a railroad then, was it?

LAKE

No. It isn't now, for that matter; but what there is of it I helped to develop, and the directors have very generously allowed me to advance along with it.

ATWOOD

How long have you been general manager of this road?

LAKE

Five years.

McCLELLAN

It never paid a dividend up to then, did it?

LAKE

No; I'm proud to say that in my first year we paid our first dividend—two per cent. on the common.

ATWOOD

Yes, I know all that. You paid seven per cent. last year, I understand.

LAKE

Yes, sir, besides putting a million into improvements without increasing the bonded indebtedness a single dollar.

McCLELLAN

Quite a record for a small railroad.

LAKE

Well, yes; but I had no idea that we were attracting any particular attention in the East.

ATWOOD

I'll be very frank with you, Lake. It isn't the road itself that has attracted our attention. We have no idea of attempting to absorb the Missouri Central. The New York and Great Western is our only concern right now. Mr. McClellan, I presume, has told you that since Mr. Coleman's retirement, I have taken over the burden of the entire organization.

McCLELLAN

Yes, I explained all that.

ATWOOD

The responsibility is a bit too heavy to shoulder at my age, and so we're after a man—a big man. The biggest railroad man in the United States is the man we want at the head of our system. That's why I came here to Kansas City to talk to you.

LAKE

(Modestly.)

Well, I'm afraid you over-estimate my ability. What do you think, McClellan?

McCLELLAN

All I'm thinking about is that cocktail you promised me. Where does the butler get them from, St. Joe?

LAKE

(Laughs.)

By Jove, he is a bit slow, isn't he?

(Rises, goes upstage and touches buzzer in wall up C.)

ATWOOD

(Good-naturedly.)

I've often told McClellan that if he'd give as much thought to law as he does to his toddies and cocktails, he'd probably turn out to be a fairly good attorney.

McCLELLAN

I care not what my master says.

LAKE

(Laughs as he comes down to above desk.)

Well, I don't know; I read his brief in that Illinois rate case, and if I'm not mistaken, it came pretty near saving the life of every railroad in the country.

(WATSON enters from R. with cocktails.)

McCLELLAN

(Bowing extravagantly.)

Thank you for them kind words, Mr. Lake.

(ATWOOD and LAKE laugh.)

LAKE

(As WATSON places the tray of cocktails on the table.)

Ah, here we are.

(WATSON stands above LAKE.)

There's one thing I will say for Watson, he does know how to mix cocktails.

WATSON

Thank you, sir.

(Exits up R. C.)

McCLELLAN

(As he takes his cocktail.)

Here's hoping you accept Atwood's proposition and bring Watson back East with you.

ATWOOD

(As he takes cocktail from tray.)

Yes, I'll drink to that myself.

LAKE

(Lifting his glass.)

Well, gentlemen, here's to the greatest railroad lawyer and to the President of the greatest railroad in America.

ATWOOD

And to you, Mr. Lake, the biggest man the railroad business has developed in the past twenty years.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

We're certainly fond of ourselves, aren't we?
(*The three laugh.*)

MRS. LAKE

(*Enters from upstage C.*)

(*As she sees the men.*)

Oh, I beg your pardon.

(*The three men rise.*)

McCLELLAN

(*Rises, and bows.*)

How do you do, Mrs. Lake?

MRS. LAKE

(*Smiles and bows.*)

Mr. McClellan.

LAKE

May I present my wife, Mr. Atwood?

ATWOOD

(*Bows.*)

A great pleasure, Mrs. Lake.

MRS. LAKE

The pleasure is mine, I assure you, Mr. Atwood. Harvey told me this morning that you were to dine with us this evening.

(*To LAKE.*)

I must apologize for being so terribly late, dear.

(*To ATWOOD.*)

I'm helping to promote a bazaar for charitable purposes, and you know what women are when they get in a conference.

(*ALL laugh.*)

ATWOOD

(*Offers her his cocktail.*)

May I — ?

MRS. LAKE

No, thank you, I never indulge.

McCLELLAN

Mrs. Lake is at the head of a big movement here in the West for the uplift of the criminal,

ATWOOD

Indeed! A very worthy movement—a splendid work.

LAKE.

The only trouble is that uplifting gets to be a form of dissipation with some people; they become intoxicated with the idea.

McCLELLAN

Well, it takes more than an idea to get me intoxicated. I'm going to drink mine.

(Lifts his glass.)

Here's to Mrs. Lake.

ATWOOD

(Raising his glass.)

And to the uplift of the criminal.

(The three men drink their cocktails.)

MRS. LAKE

If you gentlemen will excuse me just a few minutes I'll run upstairs and make myself a little more presentable for dinner.

(Starts up C.)

McCLELLAN

Please don't dress.

MRS. LAKE

(As she goes up the stairs.)

Oh, I'm not going to, really. Harvey told me it was to be informal, otherwise I should have been home an hour ago.

(Exits at head of stairs.)

ATWOOD

(To LAKE.)

A very delightful woman.

LAKE

Thank you.

McCLELLAN

Oh, she's sweet as a peach. I'm crazy about her.

LAKE

So am I.

(The three men sit.)

She's been a wonderful little wife, Mr. Atwood. I owe a great deal to her. I call her my inspiration. Just makes me succeed in everything I undertake. I'm not altogether strong for this uplifting of the criminal proposition, but I wouldn't interfere with her for the world.

McCLELLAN

(To ATWOOD.)

She offers an argument against iron bars that makes a man want to help tear down all the prisons in the country. She's got more real information on crime, and more angles on the correction of criminals, than the entire American police force, the gum shoe detectives, and the wardens all put together. I discussed the subject with her for an hour the other day, and before she quit, I give you my word of honor, she had me thinking there wasn't a crook in the country—if they'd give a crook the chance to prove it—that didn't deserve a seat in heaven, and that wasn't as good, if not better, than the best living minister of the gospel that ever breathed the breath of life. She had me going absolutely. Of course, when I got out in the open air and got back to my own line of thought, I felt entirely different about the matter, but for the time being I must admit that she had me convinced. She's some lifter, believe me, that little lady is.

LAKE

Well, I hardly think it's worth while taking seriously. They'll never get anywhere with the movement. A criminal is a criminal, and wrong-doing will never be suppressed through tolerating it. Unless crime is followed by some punishment, what is to become of society and law and order?

ATWOOD

But don't you really think that people are more and more inclined toward the doctrine of forgiveness.

McCLELLAN

We're getting nearer to it everyday.

LAKE

Well, toleration is prudence or timidity with most people. They probably have skeletons in their family closets to frighten them; in

other words, they live in houses of glass. That's my way of figuring out men who look at crime from the sentimental standpoint. I've absolutely no patience with criminals of any class.

MRS. LAKE

(Has entered on stairs at the conclusion of the above speech, and now comes down the stairs.)

Harvey Lake, what was that I just heard you say?

(MAC and ATWOOD rise as MRS. LAKE enters.)

(After bowing—ATWOOD sits.)

LAKE

(To MRS. LAKE.)

Oh, we were just discussing the railroad situation.

MRS. LAKE

Now, don't fib. I distinctly heard you say that you had no patience with criminals of any class. Isn't that what he said, Mr. McClellan?

McCLELLAN

(R. C.)

Yes; he was referring to the directors of some of the Eastern roads.

ATWOOD

What!

(McCLELLAN and LAKE laugh.)

MRS. LAKE

It was nothing of the kind. You were criticising me and my work, and I think it is very unkind of you to do such a thing.

LAKE

Well now, I'll leave it to Mr. Atwood. Didn't I pay her a beautiful compliment only a few minutes ago?

ATWOOD

He said he owed his entire success to you.

McCLELLAN

And that you were his inspiration.

LAKE

(Smiling.)

Now, you see!

MRS. LAKE

Oh, I've heard him poke fun at the idea of criminal uplifting before, but just the same, we're getting results.

(McCLELLAN sits R. C.)

ATWOOD

That's splendid. I have always insisted that there are a great many victims of circumstances.

MRS. LAKE

(Crosses to C.)

Mr. McClellan can tell you my views on the subject. We went all over that the other day.

McCLELLAN

Yes; I guess we covered the ground pretty thoroughly.

MRS. LAKE

(Goes up to R. of LAKE — over.)

You know I'm sure I would win this great big boy of mine if he'd only have the spunk to argue the question with me, but he won't even do that. I've threatened to scold him about it time and time again.

(This is delivered good naturedly.)

LAKE

Now listen, dear; I've invited these gentlemen here to dine with us, and not to listen to a sermon on "Why we should abolish prison rules?"

MRS. LAKE

(Sits R. of table.)

There now, you hear? Isn't he perfectly horrid? He positively refuses to give employment to any man who has served a prison sentence. Now, I ask you, Mr. Atwood, do you think that is fair? The man has, at some time or other, failed to live within the law, but has paid his debt to society. He has served his sentence, and is repentant and anxious for a place in the world to live down the mistakes of his past. Don't you believe that it is only right that such a man should be given a chance and encouraged to go the straight road?

LAKE

But why give the preference over the man with the clean record? There are hundreds of honest men in search of employment.

MRS. LAKE

That's the only argument he ever advances.

McCLELLAN

Well, it's a pretty logical way of looking at it.

MRS. LAKE

(Crosses to L. of McCLELLAN.)

Is it? Well, it's an accepted fact that we've never sinned until we're found out; just as we're never convicted until we're found guilty. So how are we to know that the man with the clean record, as Mr. Lake puts it, hasn't sinned to a far greater extent than the man who has served a term in prison? The only difference I can see is that one man has been found out and the other man hasn't.

(LAKE and McCLELLAN laugh.)

ATWOOD

I don't see anything to laugh at. It all sounds reasonable enough to me.

MRS. LAKE

Thank you, Mr. Atwood. You appear to be the only friend I have here.

(Sits R. of desk.)

(ATWOOD rises and bows, then sits.)

McCLELLAN

(Rises.)

Pardon me, Mrs. Lake. I was laughing at the clever way you have of winning all arguments on the subject, and not at your theory

LAKE

Well, I've managed to build up a wonderfully efficient organization by giving the benefit of the doubt to the man who hasn't been found out. Mr. Atwood seems to think so, at any rate, and he's the financial genius of the railroad business.

ATWOOD

You flatter me, Lake.

LAKE

(Smiles.)

You flattered me a while ago.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

Yes, we were all flattering one another, if I remember rightly.

MRS. LAKE

Well, for goodness sake, let's change the subject before I become wild with rage.

(Rises and goes up to R. of LAKE.)

Mr. Atwood, my husband tells me that you are trying to entice him away from our beautiful little home here and take him to that terrible old New York.

ATWOOD

That's exactly what we are endeavoring to do, Mrs. Lake, and we trust you will prevail on him to accept what is undoubtedly the opportunity of his life.

MRS. LAKE

(Smiles.)

Oh, don't look for any assistance from me; I loathe New York.

ATWOOD

But think how much wider a field you will have for the work you've taken up, when you settle in the East.

MRS. LAKE

That's very thoughtful, but the work is being very well handled back there by extremely competent people.

(Warn bell left.)

McCLELLAN

Well, Atwood, it seems that we have a greater obstacle to overcome than we anticipated.

MRS. LAKE

(To McCLELLAN.)

You just ask Harvey to repeat that speech I made when he told me of the proposition you offered him the other day.

(Goes upstage and presses buzzer.)

McCLELLAN

Well, don't blame me. I'm not in the railroad business—I'm a lawyer.

ATWOOD

Oh, I don't know; I've seen some lawyers who were capable of railroading a few things through the courts. How about it, Lake?

(WATSON *enters from R.*)

LAKE

(*Laughs.*)

Well, present company always suspected, of course.

(ALL *laugh.*)

WATSON

(*To MRS. LAKE.*)

Did you ring?

MRS. LAKE

How about dinner, Watson? What's the delay?

McCLELLAN

Yes, Watson, what's the delay?

WATSON

Be served in a very few minutes, ma'am.

(*Bell rings off L.*)

(WATSON *crosses and exits L.*)

(MRS. LAKE *goes to piano, sits on bench; McCLELLAN stands above piano, looking through music, etc.*)

LAKE

(*To ATWOOD.*)

You probably see now one of the reasons for my reluctance in leaving Kansas City.

ATWOOD

I don't believe Mrs. Lake fully realizes what a big thing the change would mean to your future career.

LAKE

Oh, well, it isn't altogether her attitude that stops me, Mr. Atwood. I'm sure that if it became necessary I could have her perfectly agreeable to the deal in five minutes' talk. As I said before, I have sentimental reasons for not wanting to leave the Missouri Central road.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

ATWOOD

Now let me show you this proposition in round figures.

(Feels in coat for a piece of paper.)

Have you a pad about?

LAKE

(Rises.)

Come right up to my den; that is, if you don't mind a flight of stairs.

(Starts up C., followed by ATWOOD.)

ATWOOD

(Following LAKE.)

Not at all.

LAKE

(To McCLELLAN, who is standing above piano, listening to MRS. LAKE playing.)

Want to see my den, McClellan?

McCLELLAN

Eh?

(Turns to LAKE.)

No, thanks, I've seen it.

LAKE

Oh, that's so, I forgot.

WATSON

(Enters from upstage C.)

Mr. Atwood's automobile at the door.

ATWOOD

Already?

(Looks at his watch.)

I told him seven-thirty.

McCLELLAN

(Looks at his watch.)

It's only six-thirty.

(Start for door upstage C.)

I'll tell him to be back in an hour, governor.

ATWOOD

No, let him wait; it's his own mistake.

McCLELLAN

All right, let him wait.

(WATSON *exits R.*)

LAKE

(*To ATWOOD as they ascend stairs.*)

Did you take your machine along all the way to the Coast, Mr. Atwood?

ATWOOD

(*Following LAKE.*)

Three of them. What's the good of a man owning control of a railroad if he can't have special trains and automobile cars?

LAKE

(*Laughs.*)

Well, that's so, too.

(*They exit at head of stairs toward L.*)

MRS. LAKE

(*Rises and goes to foot of stairs as the men exit.*)

I know what he's going to do up there; try to talk my hubby into accepting that horrid old position.

McCLELLAN

Well, you can't blame him for trying. He feels he's the one man in the country to take charge of the system, and Mr. Atwood is the sort of man that usually gets what he goes after.

MRS. LAKE

Well, for once the great financial genius of the railroad business is not going to get his wish.

(*Comes downstage to below couch R.*)

Harvey is not going to leave the Missouri Central if I can prevent it.

McCLELLAN

(*Comes downstage L. of MRS. LAKE.*)

I can't understand why you don't like New York, Mrs. Lake. Have you spent much time there?

MRS. LAKE

Not during the last ten years.

(*Sits on R. side of couch.*)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

Kansas City your home town?

MRS. LAKE

Oh, dear no. I came here the year before I was married.

(Slight pause.)

Seven years ago.

McCLELLAN

Oh, you met your husband here in town, then?

MRS. LAKE

Yes, indeed. Worked in his office.

McCLELLAN

What!

MRS. LAKE

Truly.

McCLELLAN

Doing what?

(Sits L. of MRS. LAKE.)

MRS. LAKE

Stenographer.

McCLELLAN

No!

(Laughs.)

MRS. LAKE

Harvey was general passenger agent at that time. We'd only been married a year when his promotion came and he was given the management of the road. We were very fortunate, weren't we?

McCLELLAN

I should say so. Stenographer, eh?

(Smiles.)

Well, well! A case of love at first sight, I suppose?

MRS. LAKE

Well, not quite that. I guess he took a second look; I know I did.

(Both laugh.)

We've been happy here. That's my real reason for not wanting to leave.

McCLELLAN

I can appreciate that. Tell me, when did you first become so interested in this uplift movement? You've gone into the work rather deeply, haven't you?

MRS. LAKE

Yes, I've made quite a study of it, Mr. McClellan. I don't remember just what it was that first attracted me toward the work. I think perhaps it was a case I heard of a young girl who was convicted of a crime she did not commit.

McCLELLAN

Here in Kansas City?

MRS. LAKE

No, back in New York. She was sentenced to prison for three years—degraded—labeled a convict. At the end of a year and a half they released her on parole, but with the condition that she report to the police once a month. She broke her parole—left the state, and went far away to forget.

McCLELLAN

And what became of her?

MRS. LAKE

No one knows. She just disappeared—just ran away and went into hiding.

McCLELLAN

What was the case? Who was the girl?

MRS. LAKE

I don't remember her name.

McCLELLAN

Oh, then you didn't know her personally?

MRS. LAKE

Why, no, I only know her story.

McCLELLAN

Then how do you know this girl was innocent?

(She looks at him as if not understanding the question.)

I say, what proof have you that the girl did not commit the crime for which she was convicted.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MRS. LAKE

She had no proof of her innocence.

McCLELLAN

And the circumstances pointed toward her guilt?

MRS. LAKE

Yes, she was found guilty on circumstantial evidence.

McCLELLAN

Well, I wouldn't put too much importance on stories of that kind, Mrs. Lake. I spent three years in the district attorney's office and I don't remember of any girl ever being sentenced without a fair and impartial trial. The State of New York doesn't make a business of sending innocent girls to prison. On the contrary, it's a mighty hard job to get a conviction against those who are guilty beyond a doubt. Of course, mistakes have been made. Circumstantial evidence has often led us wrong, but ninety times out of a hundred it leads us absolutely right.

(MRS. LAKE *sits staring before her.*)

What are you thinking of?

(*As she makes no reply.*)

I know you think I'm a hard-hearted old villain, don't you?

MRS. LAKE

(*Forces a smile.*)

No, I understand your legal point of view.

(WATSON *enters S. and goes to table L. C.*)

At least I think I do.

JAP

(*Enters from R., following WATSON.*)

Dinner is served, madam.

(*Exits R.*)

McCLELLAN

(*Rises quickly.*)

Good! I'm glad to hear that.

(*Goes to piano and seats himself.*)

MRS. LAKE

(*As she rises and crosses to C.*)

Tell Mr. Lake, Watson.

WATSON

(Bows and exits up the stairs.)

(McCLELLAN sits at piano and begins a song as MRS. LAKE strolls over to window L.)

(As she looks out of window she apparently sees someone in the street, screams, and comes downstage to below table L.)

(McCLELLAN jumps up from piano bench and goes to her quickly.)

McCLELLAN

(Over to her quickly.)

Why, Mrs. Lake, what's wrong?

(She makes no reply, staring wild-eyed into space, facing front.)

What's wrong? Tell me?

MRS. LAKE

(As if unconscious of McCLELLAN's presence.)

My God!

(At this point, LAKE and ATWOOD come hurriedly down the stairs, followed by EDITH and WATSON.)

(WATSON remains upstage a moment, then exits R.)

LAKE

(R. of MRS. LAKE.)

What's happened?

McCLELLAN

Hysterical, I think. She screamed without any apparent reason, then started to sway, but suddenly steadied herself.

LAKE

Listen to me, dear, what was it?

MRS. LAKE

(Doesn't reply, but forces a smile and breathlessly pantomimes the fact that she is recovering.)

ATWOOD

(After assuring himself that it is nothing serious.)

Nerves, most likely. Too much excitement.

McCLELLAN

That's just about what it is.

EDITH

(Has been standing L. of MRS. LAKE holding her hands from the time she entered from upstairs.)

Her hands are cold as ice, Mr. Lake.

MRS. LAKE

(Slowly.)

I'm all right.

(Pauses.)

I'm all right now, Harvey.

(Forces a smile.)

LAKE

How did it happen, dear? What was it?

MRS. LAKE

All went black for a moment. I can't explain. I'd like to go to my room, dear.

LAKE

(To Maid.)

You go with her, Edith.

EDITH

Yes, sir.

MRS. LAKE

(As she goes slowly upstage C., supported by EDITH and LAKE.)

I must apologize, Mr. McClellan.

McCLELLAN

Not at all. I'm so glad you've recovered so quickly.

MRS. LAKE

Mr. Atwood's right—too much excitement.

ATWOOD

(Following them upstage C.)

The nerves will stand just so much, you know, and then—

(Pantomimes breaking a stick in two.)

LAKE

I couldn't imagine what in the world had happened.

MRS. LAKE

(To LAKE, standing on first step of stairs.)

I'm awfully sorry, dear. I fear I'll have to be excused from dinner.

LAKE

I think it's best, dear. Mr. Atwood and Mr. McClellan understand.

McCLELLAN

Why, of course, don't mind us.

LAKE

I'll see that she's made comfortable.

(To ATWOOD and McCLELLAN.)

You'll excuse me.

MRS. LAKE

(To LAKE.)

Don't trouble coming upstairs, dear. Dinner is served, and besides, I'm quite myself again.

(To EDITH, as LAKE releases her.)

I'm much stronger now, Edith. I'd much rather be left alone, thank you just the same.

(Turns to the men.)

I'll say good-night, Mr. McClellan—Mr. Atwood.

ATWOOD

Good night.

McCLELLAN

Good night.

MRS. LAKE

*(Goes slowly up the stairs and exits toward L.)**(The four people on stage hold the picture until she is out of sight, then all come downstage.)**(EDITH comes downstage, straightens chairs L., then goes R. of piano and busies herself with scattered sheets of music, glasses, etc.)*

LAKE

(As he comes downstage C.)

By George, that gave me a start.

(Bell rings off L.)

(WATSON enters from R., leaving the door open, and exits upstage L.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

Came on her like that.

(Snaps his fingers.)

ATWOOD

Nothing to worry about, Lake, she'll be right as rain in an hour.

LAKE

Well, I hope this excitement won't take away your appetites entirely. I think we deserve another cocktail to sort of brace up after that.

McCLELLAN

One of the best things you've said this evening.

ATWOOD

I don't, as a rule, take two cocktails before dinner, but on this occasion I'm afraid I'll have to be weak and keep you company.

(These last three speeches are read while LAKE is leading the way into dining room R.)

(As soon as they are offstage, EDITH follows them and closes the door, then goes to piano and picks up a cocktail glass as WATSON enters.)

WATSON

(Enters from up L., comes to C., and calls to EDITH.)

Edith!

EDITH

(Over C. to WATSON.)

Yes?

WATSON

Do you know any one of the name of Burke?

EDITH

Burke?

(Slight pause.)

Yes, I know two or three families by the name of Burke.

WATSON

Well, this man drives Mr. Atwood's car. He says his name is Burke. He's at the front door and says he wants to see you.

EDITH

Wants to see me?

WATSON

He said the maid. He asked for Miss Case at first. I told him that wasn't your name. He said it didn't make any difference, that he wanted to see you.

EDITH

That's funny. At the front door? Why don't he go 'round to the servant's entrance?

WATSON

I told him to, but he said he didn't like to leave his car.

EDITH

I don't believe I know him.

WATSON

Well, you better see what he wants, anyway.

(EDITH exits upstage L.)

(WATSON takes tray of empty glasses from table L. and exits R.)

MRS. LAKE

(Enters from upstairs C., comes down and goes softly to door of dining room R. and listens, then goes over to window and stands looking out until she hears WATSON entering from R., when she turns quickly away toward C.)

WATSON

(Enters from R., goes above piano, picks up the humidior and is about to exit when MRS. LAKE speaks.)

MRS. LAKE

Where is Edith?

WATSON

(Comes from behind piano and goes R. C. as MRS. LAKE speaks.)
At the front door. Is there anything I can get for you, ma'am?

MRS. LAKE

No.

WATSON

You're feeling better, ma'am?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MRS. LAKE

Yes, thank you.

(*As WATSON starts to exit R.*)

Don't bother telling Mr. Lake that I'm downstairs, Watson. He'd probably ask me to join them at dinner, and I don't feel strong enough for that. I prefer to dine later in the evening, you understand?

WATSON

Yes, ma'am.

(*Exits R.*)

MRS. LAKE

(*As WATSON exits, she turns again to window.*)

EDITH

(*Enters from upstage L., and is about to ascend the stairs as MRS. LAKE calls, when she comes downstage C.*)

MRS. LAKE

(*Calls to EDITH, as the latter turns to ascend the stairs.*)

Edith!

EDITH

(*Turns, sees MRS. LAKE, shows surprise and comes down C.*)

Oh, you startled me, Mrs. Lake. I thought you were upstairs.

MRS. LAKE

I've quite recovered. Tell me, who rang?

EDITH

Mr. Atwood's chauffeur. It seems someone told him that a young woman friend of his was employed in this house. He says the name is Case.

MRS. LAKE

Case?

EDITH

Margaret Case. I told him there had been no one of that name in my two years here, and he thought probably it might have been before I came. He wants to know if you would mind telling him if you ever did have such a person in service, and whether you would object to writing her present address on this card. He says he has some very important news for her.

MRS. LAKE

(Steadies herself.)

Why, no, I don't remember of any such girl working here.

EDITH

I told him I didn't think so. He seems very anxious, and wanted to know if he could inquire of the other female servants in the house.

MRS. LAKE

The other female servants?

EDITH

(Smiles.)

Yes. I told him I was the only one, and then he asked to speak with you for a moment, and I explained that you were ill.

MRS. LAKE

(Points to card EDITH has in her hand.)

What's that?

EDITH

The card he gave me for the girl's address in case you knew where she was. He wrote his name on the back.

(Turns card over and reads.)

James Burke.

(Hands card to MRS. LAKE.)

MRS. LAKE

(Takes the card and reads the name. She is now under a great strain, she thinks hard and fast, and at the same time regains her control.)

Why no, tell him I've never heard of such a woman.

EDITH

Yes, ma'am.

(Starts for door upstage L., then turns back to MRS. LAKE.)

Oh, he asked as a special favor not to mention to Mr. Atwood that he had the impertinence to make such an inquiry. He said it might cost him his position.

MRS. LAKE

Case? Case, did you say?

EDITH

Case; yes, ma'am.

MRS. LAKE

There was a girl who worked for me before you came. That may have been the name. I'll see him, anyhow.

EDITH

Very well, ma'am.

(Exits upstage L.)

MRS. LAKE

(As EDITH exits, MRS. LAKE goes slowly over to R. C.)

(EDITH enters from upstage L., followed by BURKE.)

(BURKE and MRS. LAKE stand staring at each other without a word for several seconds. After a pause, with dignity and forced coldness.)

You wish to see me?

BURKE

(Standing L. of MRS. LAKE.)

Why, yes—please.

MRS. LAKE

You may go, Edith.

EDITH

Yes, ma'am.

(Exits up the stairs C.)

MRS. LAKE

(After EDITH exits.)

Now, Mr.—

(Warn Curtain.)

(Looks at card.)

Burke, is it?

BURKE

(After a pause.)

Yes, Madam, James Burke is my name.

MRS. LAKE

(She is cool now, and has herself well in hand.)

I see. Well, Mr. Burke, the maid told me of your inquiry. I did have a maid about two years ago whose name I've quite forgotten. Rather an elderly woman—she—

BURKE

No, Margaret Case is a woman not over twenty-eight. She was about nineteen when I knew her back East.

(Continues staring at her.)

MRS. LAKE

You say you were informed that this girl was in my employ?

BURKE

(After a slight pause.)

No, I'll be truthful with you, Mrs. Lake. She's a girl I've been trying to find for five years. There isn't any part of this country, East or West, that I haven't searched for her. She's a girl I wronged, Mrs. Lake. God only knows what she suffered, and all through me. You will probably understand why I had the courage to ring that door bell when I tell you I could have sworn I saw her looking down from that window five minutes ago.

(Points to window L.)

MRS. LAKE

(Has never lost control of herself for a moment.)

That window, you say?

(Assumes an intense interest.)

BURKE

(Eyeing her closely.)

Yes, and I could have taken an oath that she saw me and recognized me, too.

MRS. LAKE

That's strange. Why, I was looking out of that window only a few minutes ago. Perhaps you saw me.

(Crosses to R. of L. table.)

BURKE

(Turns with her.)

I'm sure I did.

(After a pause.)

Why did you scream, Mrs. Lake?

(This—quietly.)

MRS. LAKE

What!

BURKE

When you saw me sitting in the car.

(Pause.)

I saw you turn away and I thought I heard you scream.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MRS. LAKE

(Coldly.)

Why, what do you mean?

BURKE

(Shows embarrassment.)

I beg your pardon. I guess I—I've made a mistake.

(Stares at her.)

MRS. LAKE

(Coldly.)

Mistake? What mistake?

(BURKE makes no reply, just stares at her.)

Well?

BURKE

(Speaks slowly, but firmly, and without taking his eyes from her face.)

Why did you break your parole?

MRS. LAKE

(Looks him in the eye without moving a muscle.)

What are you going to do?

(This, after realizing that he recognizes her.)

BURKE

Nothing; just warn you never to go back. They'll get you if you do.

(She drops limply into chair R. of table.)

I knew I'd find you some day—I felt it in my heart. When I saw you looking through that window I got the first thrill of happiness I've known since the day of the arrest.

(Looks around the room.)

You're happy, ain't you?

(Warn bell L.)

MRS. LAKE

(Dazed, and without looking at him.)

I was—up to five minutes ago.

BURKE

(After a slight pause.)

You'll never see me again. I just wanted to find you in case—in hopes—well, I didn't know God had been so good to you. He owes

it to you, though, after all he made you suffer on my account. There's just one thing I've had in my mind since I came out five years ago, and that has been to find you and ask you to forgive me.

(He shows in the reading of the above speech that this is the biggest thing in his life.)

MRS. LAKE

(Rises, and slowly crosses him to R. C., then turns to him.)

(After a long pause.)

Can I help you in any way?

BURKE

Only by thinking kindly of me. Just make me one promise, and I'll leave here the happiest man on earth. Promise me you'll never set foot in the State of New York. Carroll told me the day of my release that he'd get you if it was the last act of his life—and he will, if you ever go back.

MRS. LAKE

I'm never going back.

BURKE

Goodbye, Margaret.

(Extends his hand to her.)

Margaret.

MRS. LAKE

(Takes his hand after a pause.)

Goodbye,—Jimmy.

BURKE

Thanks.

(Presses her hand, then turns and exits quickly upstage C. L.)

(MRS. LAKE stands watching him as he exits, looking at the door for several seconds after he has disappeared. She finally turns front, breathing hard and showing signs of the struggle through which she has passed.)

(At this point the door bell rings.)

(She crosses to above desk L.)

(WATSON enters from dining room R., crosses and exits up L. C. He re-enters after a few seconds, carrying a telegram, and is about to exit R., when MRS. LAKE calls.)

MRS. LAKE

Who rang, Watson?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

WATSON

A messenger, Ma'am. Telegram for Mr. Lake.

(He exits R., leaving the door open.)

(The voices of the three men are heard offstage R.)

McCLELLAN

Well, after that I'm going to drink mine. Here's to the new general manager of the New York and Great Western Railroad.

ATWOOD

And let me add that our only hope will be that you will accomplish, in a bigger way, of course, the same success with our system that you have with the Missouri Central during the past five years. Here's to Mr. Harvey Lake, general manager of the New York and Great Western Railroad.

McCLELLAN

Hear! Hear!

LAKE

That's very nice, gentlemen.

MRS. LAKE

(Has been standing above desk during above dialogue, and at the tag, falls in chair above desk.)

CURTAIN

“The House of Glass”

ACT III.

SCENE: Library in LAKE'S home in New York.

(At rise of curtain the stage is bare.)

(When curtain is full up, telephone bell on desk down R. rings.)

(Phone rings R.)

JAP

(Enters from upstage C., and comes down R. to phone.)

Hello.....Yes.....No.....No, Mr. Lake not home yet.

(Pauses.)

Oh, in about ten minutes perhaps..... Tell him what.....
What? Hello, please, who is this?.....I can't understand the name
.....Mr. What?.....Mackerel?.....Mr. Mackerel?....No?....
Will you spell it, please?.....M-c——

MRS. LAKE

(Has entered at head of stairs C. as JAP goes to phone.)

(She nows comes downstage to C. and interrupts.)

Who is it?

JAP

(In phone as he sees MRS. LAKE.)

Hello, just a minute, please. You hold the wire just a minute.

(To MRS. LAKE, as he smothers the phone.)

Someone want to speak to Mr. Lake. I can't undertand name.
Mr. Mackerel, I think.

MRS. LAKE

Let me take it.

(Takes receiver from JAP and seats herself at table.)

(The JAP exits R.)

MRS. LAKE

(In phone.)

Hello, who is this, please?.....Oh, Mr. McClellan!

(Laughs.)

The Jap said Mr. Mackerel was on the wire.

(Pause.)

No, not yet, but I expect him any minute now.... All right, I'll tell him you're coming over here, then, shall I?.... You mean about the Jackson boy?.... My dear Mr. McClellan, I've talked and talked to him.... No, he says the boy is guilty and deserves to be prosecuted.... I'd much rather you'd do it. He won't listen to me.... He was coming home early to-day to take me for a motor ride.... What?.... No, don't you do anything of the kind. You come right over and see him. It's a great deal more necessary to save a poor devil from going to jail than it is that I go speeding through the park in a limousine.... All right, we'll be looking for you. Goodbye.

(Hangs up receiver.)

LAKE

(Enters from R. as MRS. LAKE says "Good-bye." The JAP follows him on and stands upstage R.)

To whom is my wife saying good-bye?

MRS. LAKE

(Rises.)

Oh, isn't it a shame I hung up? It was Mr. McClellan on the wire. He's coming over to see you right away.

LAKE

(Good-naturedly, as he goes C.)

Well, he's not going to see me right away. I've got the car downstairs and we're going to take a nice little trip in the country, and stop at Claremont for dinner on the way back; so come on now, put on your things.

MRS. LAKE

But, Harvey, I told him you'd surely see him. I imagine it's something very important he wants to talk to you about.

LAKE

The Jackson boy again, I suppose.

MRS. LAKE

I don't know.

LAKE

Ah, ah, now you do know.

MRS. LAKE

Oh, Harvey, why are you so stubborn in the matter? I can't possibly see what good is going to come of sending a boy of twenty years to the penitentiary. If you'll only stop to consider what—

LAKE

Well, there you go.

(Crosses to L., taking off his coat, cap and gloves, and giving them to JAP, who is standing above sofa L.)

There goes my outing that I've been looking forward to. The first chance in the two years that we've been in New York for you and I to spend an afternoon together, and you go and spoil the whole thing by making appointments over my head.

(MRS. LAKE goes to L. of him.)

And now I'm doomed to sit here in the house and listen to a plea for the liberation of a common thief.

(Sits on couch L.)

MRS. LAKE

(Puts her hand on his shoulders pleadingly.)

Now, Harvey, please!

(Sits R. of LAKE on couch.)

LAKE

All right, have it your own way.

(To the JAP upstage L.)

Tell the driver not to wait; to call me up at seven o'clock.

JAP

Yes, sir.

(Exits up the stairs with LAKE'S hat and coat, then comes downstairs and exits through hallway through R.)

LAKE

You know, dear, we went all over this Jackson matter the other night, and I thought I'd convinced you that it was an utter impossibility for me to back down from the stand I've taken in the case. The boy stole the company's money. I can't understand McClellan's attitude in this affair at all, unless you've urged him to plead for the boy.

MRS. LAKE

You know better than that, Harvey. Mr. McClellan probably thinks the boy deserves another chance. Besides, you know very well that he isn't the sort of man who could be influenced by anything I might say in the matter, and I think you're perfectly horrid to intimate such a thing—now there!

(She starts upstage C.)

LAKE

(Rises.)

Where are you going?

MRS. LAKE

(Stops.)

To my room. And you needn't speak to me for the rest of the evening.

(Starts for stairs.)

LAKE

(Sternly.)

Mrs. Harvey Lake!

MRS. LAKE

Well?

LAKE

(Points to place beside him.)

Come here.

(She makes no reply.)

Come here!

MRS. LAKE

(Comes down slowly to him.)

What do you want?

LAKE

(Smiles.)

Kiss me.

MRS. LAKE

I won't.

LAKE

(Turns her around to him, coaxingly.)

Please!

MRS. LAKE

Oh, you mean, horrid old thing.

(She throws herself into his arms and kisses him.)

You know, Harvey, I thought for a moment you were really cross.

LAKE

(Laughs.)

Now I'll tell you what I'll do if you'll promise to stop talking about the Jackson boy. I'll tell you some good news.

MRS. LAKE

All right, I promise.

LAKE

Would you like to hear some terribly good news?

MRS. LAKE

Yes. Is it about the Jackson boy?

LAKE

Now, you see? There you go again.

(Turns from her and sits on downstage side of couch.)

MRS. LAKE

(Sits on couch to R. of him.)

Oh, I didn't mean that, Harvey, honestly. Go on, tell me. What's the good news? What's it about?

LAKE

It's only about me, so I don't suppose it would interest you very much.

MRS. LAKE

Now, don't say such things, please. Go on and tell me; I'm just dying to know. What is it?

LAKE

Well, the directors of the road held their annual meeting to-day, and they voted me an increase in salary and an extra bonus of fifty thousand dollars.

MRS. LAKE

Harvey, isn't that wonderful!

LAKE

Yes.

(Thinks.)

Success is always wonderful.

MRS. LAKE

That's because it brings happiness.

LAKE

And sometimes happiness brings success. You're my success;
you're my happiness.

(Kisses her.)

MRS. LAKE

Oh, Harvey, I'm so proud of you. I'm so happy.

LAKE

(Looks at her closely.)

Are you really?

MRS. LAKE

Why do you say that?

(Rises.)

LAKE

I don't know; but I often wonder if you are really happy. We
see so little of each other.

MRS. LAKE

(Smiles.)

Oh, of course, dear, I am lonely at times, but I know what your
work means to us both. Some day perhaps, when you've realized
your ambitions, and we're rich enough for you to sit back and let this
busy old world take care of itself, we can go back to our little home
in the West and be together always, just as we used to be.

LAKE

I've worried a great deal during the past two years, dear.

MRS. LAKE

About what?

LAKE

You, and the change in you since we've been here.

MRS. LAKE

(Nervously.)

Why, I'm not conscious of any change.

LAKE

Oh, you're different than when you were out there. You had so many friends; so much to occupy you; while here you refuse to meet people, to entertain, or be entertained. You seem to have lost interest in most everything. What is it? Why don't you tell me?

MRS. LAKE

Why, there's nothing to tell, dear. You know I'm not socially ambitious. I'm just interested in my home and you—that's all.

LAKE

(Rises.)

But what about this great uplift movement you were so enthusiastic about back home.

MRS. LAKE

Well, you really never approved of it.

LAKE

Of the thing itself, no. But the pleasure you found in doing it was a source of gratification to me. You know, dear, you're the most sacred thing I possess, and I want you to be happy.

(Warn Bell.)

MRS. LAKE

I am happy.

LAKE

Are you sure?

MRS. LAKE

(Goes toward C.)

Sure.

(Goes to below desk C.)

LAKE

(He watches her closely for a moment, and then moves to her, C.)

But you were happier back home, weren't you?

(She looks at him but does not reply.)

Tell me the truth.

MRS. LAKE

(After a pause.)

Yes.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

Why don't you like New York?

MRS. LAKE

(Blurts out.)

Oh, I don't know. I'm afraid—I'm afraid!

(She clings to him hysterically.)

LAKE

Afraid of what, dear.

MRS. LAKE

Of everyone here—of everything here. I'm afraid of New York.

(At this point bell rings off R.)

(MRS. LAKE has taken stage on her last line. When the bell rings they both hold their positions, she looking toward the door, and LAKE looking at her wonderingly.)

LAKE

I don't understand what you mean, dear.

MRS. LAKE

Oh, I don't understand myself sometimes. It's nothing—I didn't mean what I said.

LAKE

Yes, you did.

(Moves closer to her.)

Why haven't you told me this before?

MRS. LAKE

Please forgive me for what I've said, Harvey. I'm nervous, I'm just terribly nervous, that's all.

(Exits up stairs C.)

(LAKE stands buried in deep thought.)

JAP

(Enters from R. after ten counts, and announces.)

Mr. McClellan.

McCLELLAN

(To JAP as he enters from R.)

Good boy, you made it that time.

(To LAKE.)

He called me Mackerel over the phone.

(The JAP smiles and exits R.)

LAKE

(Without a smile.)

Hello, McClellan.

McCLELLAN

(Downstage C. to R. of LAKE.)

Hello! How do you do! Greetings and hearty congratulations, and everything else that goes with it. Atwood just phoned me about the nice thing the directors did for you this afternoon. If there was any doubt about you making good with the New York and Great Western it's past. They confirmed your success with that little present they slipped you, old boy. I'm tickled to death. I bet the Misses is, too. Did you tell her?

LAKE

(Goes up L. of table to above it.)

Yes. It was a pretty nice thing for them to do.

McCLELLAN

(As he goes up to R. of table.)

Well, it was and it wasn't. Any time a railroad calls a board of directors' meeting, and that gang of highwaymen sit around a table and agree to part with a five cent nickel of the dividends, you can take it from me that the fellow that gets the aforesaid nickel is entitled to a dime. It's coming to you. You deserve it. You've earned it. And now that that's all over and you thoroughly understand how glad I am of your good fortune, we'll get down to cases and switch over to the subject I came here to see you about.

(Gets chair over R. and brings it to R. of LAKE.)

LAKE

(Sits above desk.)

The Jackson boy.

McCLELLAN

Why, yes.

(Sits.)

For heaven's sake let up on that kid, will you?

LAKE

No, my mind is made up. I'm going to set an example with that young man. I've decided to prosecute, and that's all there is to it.

McCLELLAN

Now, see here, Lake, what's the good of sending this boy away?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

He stole the company's money, didn't he?

McCLELLAN

Oh, I know all that, but he'll make restitution.

LAKE

How?

McCLELLAN

He has a lot of friends, and I'll lend him the money myself, if necessary.

LAKE

It isn't the money, Mac, you know that—it's the principle of the thing. It makes no difference how much influence is brought to bear. I'm going to stand pat on a prosecution.

McCLELLAN

You know there are a lot of innocent people being made to suffer in this case.

LAKE

Who, for instance?

McCLELLAN

I, for instance—little me. That desk phone of mine never stops ringing from one end of the day to the other. Between that kid's family and friends, and their friends' friends, they've made my life a burden hard to bear. Every time I leave the office there's a weeping sister in the hallway. When I get to the house there's a wailing mother holding down the steps. It's got so now that I'm afraid to go home. All I dream about is crying uncles and screaming aunts. Pleasant, joyful little things to dream about, aren't they?

LAKE

I never knew it to fail. Where an honest man would look in vain for a friend, a rogue never fails to find a dozen.

McCLELLAN

Well, I honestly do feel sorry for this kid, Lake. You know it's his first offense.

LAKE

And do you ask me to establish a precedent that all men in the employ of this road will be forgiven for the first offense.

McCLELLAN

Oh, of course I understand your position in the matter. But I'm sure I can get the district attorney's office to pigeon-hole the indictment if you'll agree not to press the charge. You know this is really a very exceptional case.

LAKE

And that's the big reason I have for insisting upon a prosecution—because it is an exceptional case—because influence from every angle is being brought to save him. I'm going to show the people under me that a thief has no place with the New York and Great Western, no matter how many friends he may have or no matter how many strings he may pull.

McCLELLAN

I understand that all the employees of the road are signing a petition to be brought before you.

LAKE

That will only further my determination to see the thing through.

McCLELLAN

(Rises and places chair over R. C.)

Well, then, I guess that's all there is to it. I've done all I can do.

(Paces up and downstage R.)

LAKE

(After a pause.)

Where does all this influence come from?

McCLELLAN

How do I know?

LAKE

Well, who got to you?

McCLELLAN

Nobody can get to me.

LAKE

Don't misunderstand me, Mac. I mean, who asked you to go to the front for the boy. Now, come on, tell me the facts. Who's back of the boy? There is some one—some one big, isn't there?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

(After a pause.)

Well yes, there is.

LAKE

Who is it?

McCLELLAN

That would be a breach of confidence.

LAKE

Never a word of it from me. You can trust me—on my honor.

McCLELLAN

I probably shouldn't do this, but at that I think you ought to know. But remember, you've given me your word.

LAKE

Absolutely.

McCLELLAN

The man behind the Jackson boy is his Excellency, the Governor of the State.

LAKE

(Slight pause.)

Governor Patterson!

McCLELLAN

He's the gentleman stretching the wires. Of course, he doesn't want to be known personally in this matter, and that's the reason none of his lieutenants have got to you. But he did send for Atwood, and I'm pretty sure he got to some of the other directors of the road. Atwood immediately sent for me and instructed me to advise you to let the boy down easy. Of course, they don't want to go over your head and put it to you cold, but I'll tip you, old boy, that during the next forty-eight hours you're going to be called before the directors and told to drop the case entirely.

LAKE

That is something that I will positively refuse to do.

(Rises and goes down L. C.)

When I came here it was with the thorough understanding that I have full control of the employees of this road, and that no other man or men connected with the system could go over my head or vote down any of my ideas of management.

McCLELLAN

(Comes down below table to R. of LAKE.)

I know all that; didn't I draw up the agreement? They know exactly how you feel about the case, and they also know the stand you'll take when the show-down comes. They're all scared to death; can't you see it? That's one of the reasons for the big donation this afternoon. They want to have you feel good and make you like your job, and get you in a good humor before they put the thing up to you.

LAKE

You mean that the \$50,000 bonus voted to me this afternoon is nothing more than a bribe?

McCLELLAN

Well, you can call it anything you like, but I'd say it was proof conclusive that you've made so good at the head of the road that they're worried sick for fear they're going to lose you. You see, it isn't a matter of their going over your head, it's just a matter of their asking you not to go over theirs. They can't very well refuse to do this thing; they might have to ask a favor themselves before the year is out. I mean up in Albany. Do you get me?

LAKE

(After a slight pause.)

I think so.

McCLELLAN

Well, come on, let's drop the case and that will be the end of it. What do you say?

LAKE

(Crosses lowly to R.C., then, after a pause, he turns to McCLELLAN.)

I say no. The railroad will prosecute this case or get a new man to manage its affairs.

McCLELLAN

Well, of course, that's up to you.

(Goes over L.)

LAKE

(Stands thinking.)

This will probably be a good excuse for getting out.

McCLELLAN

Why, you weren't thinking of getting out, were you?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

(Turns partly and looks upstage C.)

Yes I'm thinking seriously of going back.

McCLELLAN

Back to Kansas City! Good God! How can a man think of such a thing.

(Over to L. of LAKE.)

New York's the place for you—the place for all big men. Look what you've accomplished in the two years you've been here. Why I'll bet that in another two years you'll be——

LAKE

(Interrupting.)

I'm not thinking of myself Mac; she isn't happy here.

*(Points upstage C.)**(Warn bell.)*

McCLELLAN

The Missus?

LAKE

Yes.

McCLELLAN

Oh, I think you imagine that.

LAKE

No, I'm sure. That's why I'm going back.

McCLELLAN

When did you make up your mind to this?

LAKE

Just a few minutes ago—before you came.

McCLELLAN

You've really decided to go?

LAKE

I think so.

McCLELLAN

Well, it's hard to believe, but if it's so, I'm damned sorry. I'm afraid it's going to make a big difference in your career.

LAKE

Perhaps. But if it makes her happy, what's the difference?

McCLELLAN

You know, if I were a girl I'd give you a kiss for that speech. That's the nicest thing I ever heard a man say about a woman.

LAKE

That's the way I feel about it.

Door bell rings off R.)

McCLELLAN

(Starts up R.)

More visitors. Well, I've got to run along and report. It will be a body blow when I tell them you refuse to drop the charge against the boy. Heaven only knows what they'll say when they find you've decided to give up the management of the road. I'm mighty thankful I'm not delegated to tell them that one.

(Gets up to door R., then comes down R. on next line.)

Remember that was *entre nous* about the Governor being interested in this case.

LAKE

(L. C.)

I understand.

McCLELLAN

(R. of LAKE in front of table.)

And if you should change your mind and decide to stay here I'll be tickled to death. You know that, don't you?

LAKE

I know how you feel about it, Mac. I'm very proud of your friendship.

(Extends his hand to McCLELLAN. They shake hands heartily.)

(McCLELLAN starts for door as JAP enters.)

JAP

(Enters from R. and announces.)

Mr. Atwood.

(Exits R. as ATWOOD comes downstage.)

McCLELLAN

(To ATWOOD.)

That's funny; I was just going to the Club to see you.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

ATWOOD

(To McCLELLAN, as he crosses him down to LAKE.)

I thought I'd catch you here.

(To LAKE, as he shakes hands with him.)

Congratulations, my boy. That was a fine compliment the directors paid you to-day.

LAKE

(C.)

I appreciate it, Mr. Atwood. It was very generous, very encouraging.

ATWOOD

Ah, you should have heard them. I never listened to so many complimentary things said about a man in all my life. You're a fixture with the road; we all agreed to that this afternoon.

(Turns to McCLELLAN, who is up R.)

Tell him what I said to you over the phone, McClellan.

McCLELLAN

Tell him yourself, it'll sound just as well. I'll see you over to the Club.

(Starts upstage R.)

ATWOOD

(To McCLELLAN.)

Wait a moment, I'll be right with you.

(To LAKE.)

Where's the little lady? I must pay my respects and congratulate her also. That's what drove me in here.

LAKE

Just a second, I'll see if she's dressed.

(Starts upstage C.)

McCLELLAN

(Impatiently.)

Oh, don't bother, Lake.

(To ATWOOD.)

See here, Atwood, these people have an appointment with themselves. We're keeping them from a motor ride.

ATWOOD

Oh, I'm sorry. Then we'll go along.

LAKE

No, please don't. Mrs. Lake doesn't know either of you're here. She'll be vexed if you run away without saying hello. Please wait; I'll go and fetch her.

(Exit upstairs C.)

ATWOOD

(Comes downstage L. to in front of table.)

Well, yes or no?

McCLELLAN

(Comes downstage R. of table.)

No.

ATWOOD

That's his final decision.

McCLELLAN

So he says.

ATWOOD

But he must realize that influence is being brought to bear.

McCLELLAN

That doesn't make any difference to him.

ATWOOD

(Goes to couch L. and sits.)

I'm afraid it will mean his position.

McCLELLAN

That won't make any difference either. He's going through with the thing for the purpose of finding out just where he stands. He feels that he is being interfered with. Heaven and earth can't change him, I'm sure of it.

ATWOOD

You mean he'd give up his future with the road rather than withdraw the charge.

McCLELLAN

That's my opinion.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

ATWOOD

(Rises, and paces up and downstage R.)

Oh, there must be some way to settle this thing. We can't afford to lose a man like Lake. Why don't you talk to him?

McCLELLAN

Talk to him! Great Scott! I've talked myself black and blue. It's no use, I tell you. You know it's no easy matter convincing a man he's wrong when you know and he knows that he's absolutely right. The Jackson boy was indicted by the grand jury and goes to trial the day after tomorrow, so you'd better make up your mind what to do. You've got to offend the men higher up by allowing Lake to have his own way, or else go over his head and refuse to allow him to press the charge as a representative of the railroad. It's one thing or the other, so you'd better decide in a hurry.

ATWOOD

You know that's Lake's one great fault; he's so damned set in his opinions.

McCLELLAN

You knew that before he came East.

(Sits in chair R. and flips pages of a magazine he has picked up from the table.)

ATWOOD

(Comes to L. of table.)

Why hound this boy?

McCLELLAN

You can't blame a man for not wanting a thief around him. I notice you got rid of that driver of yours when you found out he wasn't all he represented himself to be.

ATWOOD

(Sits on edge of table facing front.)

You mean that fellow Burke?

McCLELLAN

Yes, the chauffeur.

ATWOOD

A different kind of case entirely. The man had a prison record. They showed it to me at Headquarters. That's why I dismissed him.

McCLELLAN

(Laughs.)

Well, there you are! Why hound the man?

ATWOOD

Please don't try to be flippant.

(Rises up toward window L.)

This is no time for that.

McCLELLAN

Well, it's a poor rule that doesn't work both ways.

ATWOOD

Rats!

McCLELLAN

Are you going to talk to him yourself about this thing?

ATWOOD

(Comes downstage L.)

Do you think it will do any good?

McCLELLAN

I don't know; you might take a try at it.

ATWOOD

All right, I will.

LAKE

(Enters from C., with his arm around MRS. LAKE.)

Here we are. Here's the little lady.

ATWOOD

(Goes to her, extending his hands.)

Well, well, how do you do, little stranger?

MRS. LAKE

(Smiles as she takes his hands.)

Mr. Atwood.

ATWOOD

My, but you do hide away. I haven't seen you in ages.

MRS. LAKE

(Smiles and crosses to R. C., to McCLELLAN.)

Mr. McClellan.

(Extends her hand.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

(As he takes her hand.)

Well, how is the little hermit to-day?

MRS. LAKE

Quite well, thank you.

ATWOOD

(To LAKE.)

Have you told the good news?

LAKE

(Above desk.)

Yes, she knows.

MRS. LAKE

(Goes up to R. of LAKE above desk.)

Oh, it's wonderful, Mr. Atwood. It's so splendid that Harvey has been so successful in the management of the road. I'm terribly proud of him; and we're both very thankful for all the directors have done.

ATWOOD

He deserves it; ten times as much.

McCLELLAN

That's a pretty little speech; but it doesn't go if you try to get it, Lake.

(ALL laugh.)

LAKE

(Laughing.)

I understand that.

ATWOOD

I wish you were as funny as you think you are, McClellan; I might get a free laugh once in a while.

McCLELLAN

If I were funny enough to get a laugh out of you I'd charge admission.

ATWOOD

(Laughs.)

That's the funniest thing you've said in a year.

*(ALL laugh.)**(ATWOOD and LAKE go upstage L.)*

McCLELLAN

To MRS. LAKE, as they stroll over R. C.)

I'm afraid we've cheated you out of your automobile ride.

MRS. LAKE

Oh, I wasn't a bit anxious to go, really.

Aside.)

Any better luck about the Jackson boy?

McCLELLAN

Aside.)

No; he seems more determined than ever.

MRS. LAKE

What a pity.

McCLELLAN

(To LAKE and ATWOOD.)

Well, these two men want to talk, so I'll get along.

LAKE

What's your hurry, Mac?

McCLELLAN

(Looks at his watch.)

Oh, I'm going over to the club. I'll meet you there in half an hour, Atwood.

(Goes to door R.)

ATWOOD

Why don't you wait and I'll drive you over.

McCLELLAN

Well, I thought maybe you fellows wanted to get together. Besides, I haven't had a cocktail to-day.

(All laugh.)

MRS. LAKE

Then you come with me, and I'll mix one for you myself.

(Crosses toward L.)

McCLELLAN

Really?

MRS. LAKE

Honestly.

(McCLELLAN follows MRS. LAKE over L.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

(Laughs.)

That's right, Mac; Watson taught her before we came East.

McCLELLAN

You mean that butler you had in Kansas City?

MRS. LAKE

He's the one.

McCLELLAN

Lead me to the bar.

MRS. LAKE

(Turns to ATWOOD.)

Can I entice you, Mr. Atwood?

ATWOOD

(As he crosses upstage and comes down to R. of phone desk R. and seats himself.)

No, thanks; I'm not celebrating to-day.

McCLELLAN

He said something. Any time that gentleman takes a drink it's a real celebration.

*(Exits, preceded by MRS. LAKE.)**(Exit L.)*

LAKE

(Laughs as he comes downstage to L. of phone desk.)

He has a lot of fun with you, Mr. Atwood.

(Sits L. of ATWOOD, above desk.)

ATWOOD

(Laughs.)

Yes, and he's great fun for me. I don't know what I'd do without him, Lake. He's a great big man. In his office he's a lion in his den. After business hours, he's a boy at play.

LAKE

Big men are like that as a rule.

(Bell R.)

ATWOOD

Yes, I think so.

(Pauses, changing to seriousness.)

I want to talk to you about this Jackson case, Lake.

LAKE

I'll turn a lion if you do.

ATWOOD

The great trouble is, you don't understand the situation. This boy comes from one of the oldest families in town. We put him in the office to learn the business, that's all.

LAKE

Now, Mr. Atwood, I want to settle this matter for once and for all. If the President of the United States came to me to intercede for this boy, my answer would still be "no." A thief has no business place in the world—that's my platform.

(Slams drawer of table shut, rises and goes C. below desk.)

JAP

(Enters from R., with card on tray.)

LAKE

(To JAP.)

Some one to see me?

JAP

Yes, sir.

(Goes to LAKE and extends tray.)

LAKE

(Takes the card and reads.)

"David H. Carroll, Police Headquarters."

(Thinks, trying to recall the name.)

Carroll.

ATWOOD

He's the man that made the arrest in the Jackson case, don't you remember?

LAKE

Why, yes, that's so.

(To the JAP.)

Show him in.

JAP

(Bows, exits R., leaving door open.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

ATWOOD

(Rises.)

Well, I suppose that you want to talk to him privately.

LAKE

No, I hardly think so. I don't imagine it's anything of great importance.

*(ATWOOD resumes his seat R. of phone desk.)**(LAKE goes above desk C.)*

CARROLL

(Enters from R., followed by JAP, who closes the door, then exits upstage C., towards R., in hallway.)

(CARROLL goes C. to LAKE.)

How do you do, Mr. Lake.

LAKE

How are you, Carroll.

ATWOOD

Hello, Carroll.

CARROLL

(Turns toward ATWOOD.)

Oh, how do you do, Mr. Atwood.

(Turns to LAKE.)

CARROLL

I want to apologize for coming to your house, Mr. Lake. I tried to get you at the office but they said you'd gone. I'd have got you on the phone, but I don't trust the operators with anything that sounds like a newspaper story, so I took a chance and came here myself.

LAKE

That's all right, Carroll. Sit down.

CARROLL

(Sits R. C.)

Thank you.

ATWOOD

(Rises and goes upstage C.)

Now I know it's private, so I'll go.

(As he gets up to R. of LAKE.)

I'll see you at your office in the morning, Lake.

LAKE

All right.

ATWOOD

(Starts for R. door, then turns.)

Oh, I wonder if that attorney of mine has finished his cocktail yet.

LAKE

(Laughs.)

I'll see.

ATWOOD

Oh, how have you been, Carroll?

CARROLL

Very well, thank you.

LAKE

(Goes to door R., opens it and calls.)

Oh, Mac! McClellan!

(As LAKE goes L., ATWOOD stands scowling at CARROLL.)

(He strolls upstage, turns and stands glaring at CARROLL until McCLELLAN enters.)

McCLELLAN

(Offstage L.)

Hello!

LAKE

Mr. Atwood's waiting for you; he's ready to go.

McCLELLAN

(Offstage L.)

All right; just a minute.

LAKE

(Laughs as he returns to above desk.)

I hear the billiard balls; I guess they're playing a game.

ATWOOD

(Turns to LAKE.)

Billiards!

(Laughs.)

He can't run ten points in three hours. I'm going.

(Starts for R. door.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

(Appears at door L., with billiard cue in his hand.)

Say, Atwood, come in here and see this little girl play billiards.

(ATWOOD starts for L. door.)

She's a wizard.

LAKE

That's right.

(ATWOOD turns toward LAKE.)

We play every night. She beats me too.

ATWOOD

Well, we'll have to see how she does it.

(Crosses to door L. and exits, leaving door open.)

McCLELLAN

(As he sees CARROLL.)

Hello, Carroll!

(Goes upstage back of settee L. and comes down to L. of LAKE'S desk.)

CARROLL

(Rises and bows.)

Mr. McClellan.

McCLELLAN

What's the idea? More crooks discovered in railroad office?

LAKE

(Looking at CARROLL.)

I hope it's nothing like that.

CARROLL

(Smiles.)

Well, hardly.

McCLELLAN

Well, whatever it is, I'm in on it. The Police Department is the best friend we lawyers have. If there wasn't someone to put them in, there wouldn't be anyone for us to get out. Ha! ha! Good joke, isn't it? I must tell that to Atwood—he'll laugh himself sick.

(Exits L., closing door.)

LAKE

(As he sits above desk.)

You've met McClellan before?

CARROLL

(Sits R. C.)

Yes; I knew him when he was in the district attorney's office.

LAKE

I see.

CARROLL

I didn't want to spill in front of Atwood what I came here to see you about, because I know he's been pulling strings to go over your head and have this Jackson case pigeon-holed. I suppose you know that too.

LAKE

That doesn't matter, Carroll. I'm dictator in the New York and Great Western offices. My word is law, and as I told you the day of the arrest, I'm positively going to press the charge.

LAKE

(Looks at memo.)

Let me see, the trial is set for this week, isn't it?

CARROLL

Day after tomorrow. But the trouble is, Mr. Lake, that the boy has jumped his bond.

LAKE

Jackson!

CARROLL

Looks that way. We located him in Vancouver by telegraph this morning. I was always leary of this kid jumping away ever since the influence started to work for him, so I began to snoop around and get a line on what he was doing, and sure enough I discovered that he left New York a week ago. It's five days to Vancouver, so it's a cinch he won't be here to stand trial.

LAKE

Are you sure about this?

CARROLL

Sure as shooting. He's in Vancouver, I tell you.

LAKE

(Thinks.)

Have you notified the surety company that went his bond?

CARROLL

Humph! You don't suppose they care, do you? They're always protected.

LAKE

It will take some time to extradite him.

CARROLL

Yes, and a lot of red tape with the pull he's got; but, in the meantime, if his foot slips on anything that belongs to Uncle Sam, we'll get him before he knows it.

LAKE

That's too bad. This is one case where I want prosecution.

CARROLL

So do I.

(Rises.)

I just want to show some of these high-falutin' monkeys that go around pulling strings for a lot of crooks that it takes more than political influence to make a joke out of the laws of this State.

(Up to LAKE.)

I want to thank you for the stand you've taken in this case, Mr. Lake. I've been getting inside dope on it, and I know how you've gone through. If we had a few more men like you in this burg the police wouldn't have half as much to worry about, and the community would be a whole lot better off.

LAKE

You're sure you'll get him later on?

CARROLL

You can bank on it. There isn't a headquarters in this country that won't have an accurate description of that bird tomorrow morning.

(Sits in chair down R.)

LAKE

Vancouver, eh?

CARROLL

Yes. Have you ever been there?

LAKE

No.

CARROLL

Well, no regular guy can stay there very long. . . It's one of those minor league cities where they hang around drug stores. But, extradition or no extradition, he'll come back into the States—they always do. I've had twenty-two years' experience with bond jumpers and parole breakers, Mr. Lake, and I never knew it to fail that they didn't take the chance sooner or later and get nailed.

LAKE

Well, I want you to get this man if it's the last thing you ever do.

CARROLL

It may take a little time, but you can go to sleep on the bet that I'm trying all the time.

(Rises and goes upstage a bit.)

And there's another thing I want to impress on you, Mr. Lake, and that is that there ain't any money proposition from the influence behind this kid that will ever make me forget my duty. I'm no grafter. I could have been a rich man ten years ago if I wanted to double-cross the department and stand for a little rough work, but that isn't my way of going along. There's one thing that I'm proud of, and that is that I'm on the level. The crooks call me a rat and a dog, and a Sunday-School copper, and a few other pet names, but they'll tell you that I'm honest.

LAKE

I don't doubt that in the least, Carroll.

CARROLL

(R. C.)

Well, I thought maybe you might think I was in on this kid's getaway, so I made up my mind to get to you quick and let you know what kind of a guy I am.

LAKE

You're a man after my own heart, Carroll.

CARROLL

Thanks.

LAKE

I wish you'd keep in touch with me and let me know if anything develops in the case during the next few days.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

CARROLL

(Looks at his watch.)

Sure. As fast as we get any information at headquarters we'll whip it right over to you.

LAKE

That's the idea.

CARROLL

I wish you'd give me a note to Thompson, head of your detective force.

LAKE

Certainly.

(Starts to write when phone rings. He rises and goes down R. and sits at phone table.)

(The JAP enters from R. to answer phone, and stands downstage L. of LAKE.)

(CARROLL strolls over R. and downstage to R. of phone.)

LAKE

(In phone.)

Yes....Mr. Atwood?....Yes, he's here. Who wants him?....
The what club?....Just hold the wire; I'll send for him.

(Lays down receiver and turns to JAP.)

Go in the billiard room and tell Mr. Atwood he's wanted on the wire.

JAP

Yes, sir.

(Exits L. quickly.)

LAKE

(To CARROLL, as he smothers the phone.)

Do you think I should tell Atwood and McClellan that the boy has jumped his bond?

CARROLL

(X. to R. in from fireplace.)

Oh, I suppose you might as well. They'll probably find it out to-morrow, anyway.

ATWOOD

(Enters from L.)

Someone for me?

(Crosses.)

LAKE

(Rises.)

Yes, the Republican Club.

(Goes upstage C. and works to above his desk.)

ATWOOD

(Seats himself at desk and picks up receiver.)

Hello! Yes, this is Mr. Atwood . . . All right, put him on.

(Waits for connection.)

McCLELLAN

(Enters from L.)

Who is it?

ATWOOD

(To McCLELLAN.)

The Republican Club.

(In phone.)

Yes, I'm waiting.

McCLELLAN

How did they locate you?

(Goes upstage L. a bit.)

ATWOOD

I left word that I was coming here.

(In phone.)

Hello!

(Pause.)

MRS. LAKE

(Enters hurriedly from L., and goes toward McCLELLAN.)

Oh, Mr. McClellan, why——

(McCLELLAN silences her, pointing toward ATWOOD at phone.)

(As she looks at ATWOOD she sees CARROLL, who is standing downstage R.)

(The two stand and stare at each other from this moment.)

ATWOOD

(In phone.)

Yes . . . Hello, Maddox . . . What makes you think he did? . . . Are you sure about it? . . . Where did you get that information? . . . Oh, you did, eh? Well, wait, hold the wire a second.

(To CARROLL, as he smothers mouth of phone.)

Have you heard anything about young Jackson jumping his bonds?

(CARROLL makes no reply.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

(Standing above desk C.)

Yes, that's what Carroll came to see me about.

McCLELLAN

(Up L. C.)

Jumped it, eh? What do you think of that!

ATWOOD

(In phone.)

Where'd he get to, did you hear? Way out there, eh?
They are, eh? That's too bad Yes, I'm coming over there now.
You wait there for me All right, good-bye.

*(NOTE.—During this phone conversation, in fact from the time
CARROLL and MRS. LAKE have seen each other, they have never taken
their eyes from each other.)*

ATWOOD

(Rises and goes up R. C.)

Well, the young man is in British Columbia.

McCLELLAN

(Whistles.)

Some jump!

ATWOOD

(Looks at CARROLL.)

When did you learn this, Carroll?

CARROLL

This morning.

McCLELLAN

(L. C.)

Who was that just phoned you?

ATWOOD

Young Maddox. He got it from a police reporter.

LAKE

(To CARROLL.)

He must have got the story from headquarters, Carroll.

CARROLL

Then there's a leak in the department. I told them not to give it
out.

McCLELLAN

Well, Lake, it looks as though this boy were liable to slip away from you after all.

CARROLL

(Down R.)

(Stares at MRS. LAKE during speech.)

Oh, he'll come back; they all come back. It's one case in a hundred when they don't. Some play it safer than others, and stay away a long time until they think it's forgotten, outlawed, and thrown in the discard. But such a thing never happens in the New York police department. We never forget. We have ways of remembering—a system of identification that's the most perfect in the world. They can stay away a year or two, or ten—

(Emphasizes the word ten.)

—but we get them if they ever come back.

(Looks at his watch and goes upstage to R. of LAKE.)

I've got to get down to the Central office. I've got some pretty important work to do on one of my old cases.

(LAKE hands note to CARROLL.)

Thank you.

(Turns to ATWOOD and McCLELLAN.)

Good-bye, Mr. Atwood—Mr. McClellan.

ATWOOD

(Sits R.)

Good-bye Carroll.

McCLELLAN

So long.

(At this point MRS. LAKE moves up to L. of LAKE.)

CARROLL

(Starts for door R.)

Don't you worry about this thing, Mr. Lake. The case is in my hands—

(Turns back to R. of LAKE.)

—And if I do say so myself, I've been exceptionally lucky with most of my cases.

(Looks at MRS. LAKE.)

(Bows.)

Mrs. Lake?

(To LAKE.)

Your wife?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

Oh, yes.

(*To MRS. LAKE.*)

This is Mr. Carroll, dear.

(*MRS. LAKE bows to CARROLL.*)

CARROLL

(*Significantly.*)

I'm very pleased to meet you, Mrs. Lake.

MRS. LAKE

Thank you.

CARROLL

(*Starts for door R., stops and turns to ATWOOD down R.*)

Oh, I knew there was something I wanted to speak to you about, Mr. Atwood.

ATWOOD

What's that.

CARROLL

I'm glad you took my tip and got rid of that chauffeur you had two years ago. I gave orders at headquarters to put you wise to him.

ATWOOD

Oh, then it was through you that I got the word?

(*MCCLELLAN sits on sofa L.*)

CARROLL

Sure. I sent Crowley to you with his whole record. It's a good thing you let him go—he was a bad bird.

(*Turns to LAKE and MCCLELLAN.*)

Mr. Atwood had an ex-convict driving his car and didn't know it. A fellow named Burke, James Burke. Served two or three terms in prison. The last time he was sent up was about ten years ago. He and a girl pal of his did a house-breaking job, and come pretty near getting away with it, but we nabbed them and sent them away for three years. He served his time; but the girl, after being released on probation, broke her parole; so we've been after him ever since, hounding him out of every job he gets, trying to make him confess to the girl's whereabouts.

ATWOOD

Oh, so that was the idea.

CARROLL

Certainly. You can't blame us for trying to get the girl, can you?

McCLELLAN

(To MRS. LAKE.)

That's what they call playing one crook against the other.

CARROLL

It's an interesting story, isn't it, Mrs. Lake?

MRS. LAKE

Yes, but rather severe methods, I should say.

CARROLL

How do you mean?

MRS. LAKE

Why, making it impossible for the man to earn a living.

LAKE

Don't mind Mrs. Lake, Carroll. She's been doing a lot of prison reform work in the West.

CARROLL

(Interested.)

Oh, is that so?

McCLELLAN

(To MRS. LAKE.)

This is something like the story you told me in Kansas City, Mrs. Lake.

MRS. LAKE

(Nervously.)

What was that?

McCLELLAN

Don't you remember about the girl breaking her parole and going into hiding?

CARROLL

(Slight pause.)

Well, maybe it was the same girl.

(To MRS. LAKE.)

Was her name Case—Margaret Case?

MRS. LAKE

(After a slight pause.)

I didn't know the girl's name.

LAKE

Someone you heard of, dear?

MRS. LAKE

Yes.

CARROLL

(To MRS. LAKE.)

Did it happen here in New York?

MRS. LAKE

No, in the West.

McCLELLAN

I thought you told me it was here in New York.

MRS. LAKE

(Nervously.)

Did I? Why, no, you must be mistaken, Mr. McClellan. I'm sure it happened in the West.

(MARGARET looks at CARROLL.)

CARROLL

Oh, then it can't be the same girl. I think we've finally landed the one we've been after.

(MARGARET looks at CARROLL.)

It's taken us a long time, but I'm pretty sure we've got her at last.

MRS. LAKE

(Keeping herself under control.)

You mean she's been placed under arrest?

CARROLL

Not yet, but she will be as soon as we're convinced that it's not a case of mistaken identity.

LAKE

Oh then she came back, did she?

CARROLL

Sure Didn't I just tell you that they all come back? She's right here in New York this minute, or else no two people were ever born so near alike before.

MRS. LAKE

Then you're not sure she's the one you're after?

CARROLL

Sure enough to stake my reputation on it. Of course if it were an ordinary case we'd make the arrest without giving it second thought, but it happens that the woman is married to a very prominent man, so we've got to go slow until we're satisfied beyond the shadow of a doubt.

(Slight pause.)

It looks like it's going to be a very sensational affair all around, and I'm going to have the satisfaction of cleaning up my record, because she's the only one that ever got away from me in twenty-two years of service.

ATWOOD

And this girl was Burke's pal?

CARROLL

Yes. It's a small world, isn't it?

McCLELLAN

She's married to a prominent man, eh?

CARROLL

Yes, you'd be staggered if I told you who he was. It's a cinch that he doesn't know he's married to a parole-breaker. He's the only one I feel sorry for in the whole affair. If anything new happens in the Jackson case I'll call you up, Mr. Lake.

LAKE

I wish you would, Carroll.

CARROLL

Good-bye, Mrs. Lake. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you again.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

MRS. LAKE

(Forcing a smile.)

Thank you, Mr. Carroll.

CARROLL

(Turns to ATWOOD and McCLELLAN.)

Good-bye, gentlemen.

McCLELLAN AND ATWOOD

Good-bye.

(CARROLL starts for door R.)

LAKE

(As he follows CARROLL.)

I'll see you to the door, Carroll.

(Exits R., following CARROLL.)

ATWOOD

(To McCLELLAN, as he rises.)

We'd better get along, too.

McCLELLAN

(Rises.)

I think so.

ATWOOD

(As he goes upstage R.)

I'll come around some evening and play you thirty-four points of billiards, Mrs. Lake.

(Opens door R.)

MRS. LAKE

All right, Mr. Atwood.

McCLELLAN

(As he goes upstage L., and to above MRS. LAKE.)

And I'll come around with him and give him a few points. He'll need them if he's going to try to get thirty-four.

ATWOOD

(Laughs.)

Bye, bye. Come along Mac.

(Exits R., leaving door open.)

McCLELLAN

(Starts R., and then turns back to MRS. LAKE.)

What do you think of the boy jumping his bond?

MRS. LAKE

I'm not surprised.

McCLELLAN

Neither am I. To tell you the truth, I rather expected it. Well,
au revoir.*(Starts for door R.)*

MRS. LAKE

Good-bye, Mr. McClellan.

*(McCLELLAN exits R., closing the door.)**(MRS. LAKE stands staring toward the door. After four or five counts she turns and stares into space, facing front. She finally loses control of her limbs, falls into chair above table C., breaks down and weeps bitterly. After a pause, LAKE enters.)*

LAKE

(Enters from R., sees her sobbing, and rushes quickly to her.)

Why, what's happened? What's the matter?

MRS. LAKE

(Between sobs.)

It's nothing, Harvey, nothing at all.

LAKE

But something's wrong. Tell me what it is, dear.

MRS. LAKE

*(Makes no reply, but rises and moves over to sofa L.)**(She shows that the struggle she has just passed through has had its effect, and is almost limp as she falls on the settee.)*

LAKE

(Has been standing watching her.)

I know what it is.

(Moves over to her.)

The story Carroll just told has affected you, hasn't it.

MRS. LAKE

Yes.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

(Kindly tone.)

Well, you can't afford to take other people's troubles to heart in this way, dear. You know you always do that, and it always has the same effect; makes you miserable. Of course your sympathies are with the woman, but after all, dear, it isn't going to do her any good nor you any good to make yourself unhappy over an affair in which you are entirely disinterested. It's a matter between her and the police. Come now, forget all about it.

*(He leans over and pats her shoulder lovingly, then sits her on settee.)**(She dries her eyes and sits staring in front of her.)**(After a short silence, while he watches her face.)*

What are you thinking of now, dear?

MRS. LAKE

(Without changing her expression.)

Of that woman's husband, and what it will mean to him when the blow is struck.

LAKE

Well, if he's a big man he'll find a way to meet the situation. If he's been harboring a criminal, the sooner he finds it out the better.

MRS. LAKE

(After a pause.)

You mean he'll be glad to learn the truth?

LAKE

If he's been ignorant of the fact that his wife is an ex-convict why shouldn't he be glad to learn the truth?

(She makes no reply.)

There, come now, let's not discuss the matter any further. It means absolutely nothing in our lives, and it's making you terribly unhappy. Now please.

*(MRS. LAKE rises and crosses toward C. As she reaches the edge of the table she sways.)**(LAKE goes quickly to her and steadies her.)*

What's the matter, dear?

MRS. LAKE

(Evades him and goes to right hand corner of table and faces him.)

Oh, I wish to God you could guess, so I wouldn't have to tell you.

LAKE

Tell me what, dear?

MRS. LAKE

(Steadies herself.)

That's why I led a hermit's life here in New York. That's why I've been afraid of everything, of everyone here. That's why Carroll told the story.

(Warn Curtain.)

LAKE

Why, what do you mean, dear?

MRS. LAKE

(After a long pause.)

I am that woman.

(Pause.)

I am Margaret Case.

(The only visible effect this has on LAKE is that he stands perfectly rigid, looking before him without the movement of a muscle or change of expression. It seems to stun him. MRS. LAKE waits for some reply. As none comes, she looks up, sees the expression on his face and wrings her hands in agony, realizing that his silence is proof of his suffering.)

I served one year and a half, and then was put on parole. I broke my parole because I was innocent. Do you hear me, Harvey, I was innocent. As God is my judge, I was innocent. I went away to forget, and I met you.

(Pause.)

I hoped and prayed never to see this city again.

(Pause.)

But when you decided to come here, what could I do? No human mind can realize the sufferings I've endured. I've fought my fight and no one has seen the struggle. I was selfish to allow you to marry me in ignorance. I've assailed myself and defended myself a thousand times. I loved you, Harvey, and the thought of losing you made a coward of me. I couldn't tell you. If I'd lost you there would have been nothing left for me in the world. I thought I was away from it all; that it was all far behind me. And now, after ten years of silent, dogged pursuit, the law is knocking at the door again. God forgive me, I've ruined your life.

(She turns R., with a bitter cry and falls in chair R., above the phone desk, sobbing.)

LAKE

(During the above speech he has stood stone still. He turns and looks at her without any sign of emotion. After staring at her for several seconds, he looks front as if studying or rather summing up the entire situation. His manner shows he is utterly dazed by the suddenness of the confession and has not brought himself to believe that what he has just heard is the truth. He turns and goes to settee L., sits and reads the carpet for a few moments. He runs his hand dazedly through his hair, then rises and moves over to L. of MRS. LAKE.)

LAKE

What of this man **Burke**? What were you to him?

MRS. LAKE

We were engaged to be married.

(Pause.)

We had never met until two weeks before the arrest.

LAKE

He was a crook. Did you know that at the time?

MRS. LAKE

(Shakes her head negatively.)

No. What he had stolen was supposed to have been left to him by some member of his family.

LAKE

(Pause.)

Your name is Margaret Case?

(She bows affirmatively.)

You married me under an assumed name?

(She nods.)

Then it was no marriage.

(A long pause, while he stands looking at her. She keeps her head bowed on her arms for several seconds. Then, as the full realization of his words penetrates, she looks up at him startled.)

(He crosses slowly to the left hand edge of table and stands with his back to the audience.)

I can't believe this is true.

MRS. LAKE

(She sits watching him as he goes over L., then finally forces enough strength into her body to rise and move upstage to R. of table.)

I'm going away, Harvey.

(Pause.)

If I don't they'll come and take me, and I could never stand that.

(Pause.)

Won't you say something to me before I go? I know I don't deserve any consideration at all—

MRS. LAKE

(Stretches her arms out to him.)

—but won't you please say something to me?

LAKE

(Stands looking coldly at her for several seconds, then deliberately goes up the stairs C., and exits at head of same.)

(MRS. LAKE stands looking after him, then rushes over to Left portiere on C. door, and stands watching LAKE as he comes down the stairs.)

(As LAKE enters at head of stairs, he is dressed in overcoat and hat. He comes down and goes to door R., paying no attention to MRS. LAKE.)

MRS. LAKE

(As LAKE gets to R. door, she takes a few steps toward him shrieking.)

Harvey, where are you going?

LAKE

Police Headquarters, to find Carroll and learn the truth.

(Exits R.)

MRS. LAKE

Police Headquarters. No, no, I can't go back.

(Turns front.)

I can't go back!

(She falls on floor R. of table, sobbing hysterically.)

(Ad lib. as the curtain falls.)

CURTAIN

“The House of Glass”

ACT IV.

SCENE: *Same as Act III.*

(Bare stage at rise of curtain.)

(After curtain is up a few seconds, LAKE and McCLELLAN enter from R., followed by the JAP, who closes the door and goes C.)

LAKE

Oh, Wada.

JAP

Yes, sir.

LAKE

Tell Mrs. Lake I'm here. Say that I wish to see her.

JAP

Yes, sir.

(Takes the men's coats and hats, puts them in the hall, then goes upstairs.)

LAKE

Sit down, Mac.

(Sits above table; McCLELLAN sits on sofa L.)

McCLELLAN

(After a pause.)

You say you couldn't find Carroll at Police Headquarters.

LAKE

No; they said he hadn't been there since morning.

McCLELLAN

What were you going to talk to him about if you had found him.

LAKE

Ask him point blank if my wife was the woman he suspected.

McCLELLAN

Well, that would have been a fine fool thing to do. You might as well have gone to him with a full confession.

LAKE

I didn't know what my intentions were, Mac; I don't know yet. I can't realize that such a thing can be.

(JAP enters from stairs up C., comes down, and exits through hallway toward R.)

McCLELLAN

(Rises, goes upstage, and crosses back of table to R.)

Did you tell Mrs. Lake that you were coming to see me?

LAKE

No.

McCLELLAN

(After a pause.)

What are you going to do, Lake?

LAKE

What do you mean?

McCLELLAN

I mean, what stand are you going to take?

LAKE

I don't know, Mac. I'm dazed, stunned.

(Rises and comes down R. of table to C.)

Of course, the first thing I'll do will be to resign my position with the road. It's the only way I can avert bringing disgrace upon the men who have befriended me.

(Moves over toward L., his face half turned front.)

McCLELLAN

Well, now, don't go rushing headlong into things until we know just where we're at. There's a lot of thinking to do, so take it easy.

MRS. LAKE

(Enters on stairs and comes slowly down to C. above table. The torture she has suffered in the last hour shows plainly in her movements. She demonstrates this by leaning and resting after every step until she reaches C.)

(After a pause, she speaks almost in a whisper, as she leans against the table to support herself.)

You—you sent for me?

(Both men turn and look at her.)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

LAKE

Yes. Mr. McClellan has agreed to act as your attorney. I have told him all you told me. He has come to hear the facts of the case from your own lips.

MRS. LAKE

(Shakes her head despairingly.)

There is nothing more to tell.

(Turns to McCLELLAN.)

You will find a full record of the case at Police Headquarters.

McCLELLAN

(Takes a step towards her.)

Now, come, Mrs. Lake, you must help me if you expect me to help you.

MRS. LAKE

(Hopelessly.)

It's no use.

(Pauses for breath.)

I give up the fight. I'm tired.

(Warn phone R.)

McCLELLAN

(R. of table.)

You can't give up the fight. You were *innocent*?

MRS. LAKE

The State said I was guilty.

McCLELLAN

But you *were* innocent.

MRS. LAKE

(After a pause.)

Yes.

(Looks at LAKE over L.)

I don't expect my husband to believe me. My life with him has been a lie from the start—a terrible lie.

McCLELLAN

(Phone rings.)

(Crosses above table to L. C., above LAKE.)

Come on, Lake, it's up to you; she can't make the fight alone.

(Pause.)

(The telephone rings—no one moves—the phone rings again.)

(LAKE goes to phone—McCLELLAN remains L.)

LAKE

(Comes down to phone and takes receiver off hook.)

Hello! Mrs. Lake? Who wants Mrs. Lake? She's here, yes. Who is this? Yes, I'll have Mrs. Lake come to the phone if you'll tell me who wishes to talk to her. . . . Just say a friend of hers? Very well, hold the wire.

(Turns to MRS. LAKE.)

Some one for you.

MRS. LAKE

(Frightened.)

Who is it?

LAKE

He wouldn't say.

(MRS. LAKE looks at McCLELLAN without making any move toward the phone.)

McCLELLAN

See who it is.

(Motions to her to go to phone.)

MRS. LAKE

(Goes down to phone table and sits; LAKE stands R.)

Hello Yes.

(She expresses surprise and fright as she takes the message.)

Why, no No Why, there's—there's a mistake
No No, of course not Why, just a moment.

(She looks up at LAKE after smothering phone.)

LAKE

Who is it?

(MRS. LAKE makes no reply.)

McCLELLAN

Who is it, Mrs. Lake?

MRS. LAKE

Burke.

LAKE

Burke!

McCLELLAN

(Comes downstage.)

What does he want?

MRS. LAKE

He received a message a few minutes ago stating that I wished to see him here.

LAKE

What does this mean, McClellan?

McCLELLAN

It means that Carroll's at work, and that's the way he's working. He'll probably trail Burke here and force him to identify her. It's a police trick—a trap—that's all.

(To MRS. LAKE.)

Tell him to come.

LAKE

No, not to this house.

McCLELLAN

I know what I'm doing, Lake. I want to get hold of Burke before Carroll does. Let me manage this, please.

(To MRS. LAKE.)

Go on, tell him to come.

MRS. LAKE

(Looks toward LAKE, who after a moment's hesitation, gives consent by nodding his head. In phone.)

Hello... Yes... Yes. I wish you would come here immediately. I'll explain when you get here. Do you know where to come? ... Oh, that's so, the address was in the message... Yes, I forgot... Yes, thank you.

(Hangs up receiver.)

LAKE

Does this man know who you are?

MRS. LAKE

Yes.

LAKE

Then you've seen him since we've been here?

MRS. LAKE

No. I saw him in Kansas City when he came there with Mr. Atwood. He recognized me and asked to see me.

LAKE

And you talked to him?

MRS. LAKE

Yes, I thought it best.

McCLELLAN

He made a demand for money, I suppose?

MRS. LAKE

(Rises.)

No. He warned me never to come back to New York; that Carroll would get me if I did.

(Rises, and goes to above table C.)

He was right—they've got me.

(Sits in chair above table.)

McCLELLAN

(Up to L. of MRS. LAKE.)

No, they haven't—not yet, Mrs. Lake. I know enough about the Probation Law to know that it was never meant as a weapon of oppression. If Mr. Carroll, or anyone else, imagines he's going to drag you out of your home and flaunt you as a criminal for the sake of advertising the Department he'll find he has a cute little rough and tumble legal battle on his hands. I haven't taken a crack at the police heads of this town in four or five years, and something seems to tell me that I'm just about due.

(Paces up and down L. angrily on the latter part of above speech.)

(LAKE is over R., watching MRS. LAKE.)

(MRS. LAKE is sitting at table with her head buried in her arms.)

(Has been pacing up and down stage L. He now stops L. of MRS. LAKE, and leans over the table towards her.)

The story you told me in Kansas City that evening was your own.

(She raises her head and nods.)

(After a pause.)

(Warn bell L.)

Mrs. Lake, we have a problem before us, and you must not lose the courage you've shown through it all until we've fought it out every inch of the way.

MRS. LAKE

I don't care what happens; my life means nothing to me now.

(Looks towards LAKE.)

He could never forgive me—now that he knows.

McCLELLAN

What does he know? He knows that you are innocent—that you are not the sort of woman who could have pursued a life of crime. He knows that you are good—that your heart and hands are clean; that wherever you've been you've inspired respect, and that your one chance to replenish your empty life was with a husband's love, and that one word might have spoiled it all. He knows why you never told him the story until to-day; because he knows the remorseless prejudice of the world toward anyone who has served a prison sentence. He knows that though your lips were silent, your conscience never was. He knows that the home he has given you has been kept beautiful and lovely through all the years of your married life. He knows that it was to satisfy his ambitions and to further his success that you sacrificed your safety in the West and came here where the past and future were inseparably linked. There is nothing for him to forgive. He——

(Directs rest of speech right at LAKE.)

——He should thank God for the chance to stand by and protect such a wonderful little woman.

(After a pause, he crosses over to R. above LAKE.)

Lake, the Jackson boy's mother is very ill. The shock of his running away might kill her. If you'll agree not to press the charge against him, his friends will bring him back. It might be the means of saving the woman's life——

(A long look passes between LAKE and McCLELLAN.)

There's another angle to it now. Do you get my meaning?

LAKE

(A long pause, while he looks at McCLELLAN, until seemingly convinced.)

Yes.

McCLELLAN

(Goes to phone.)

The Biltomore, please.

(Waits for connection.)

I want to speak to Mr. Judson Atwood, please . . . Mr. McClellan . . . Hello, Atwood? . . . This is Mac. I've just had another talk with Lake on that matter . . . Yes, I finally told him about the party interceding for the boy . . . Yes . . . Oh, in strict confidence, of course. Tell me, is he in town? Here in New York now, I mean . . . He is, eh? Now, listen; I'm pretty sure that if that party will get to Lake personally, the whole matter will be arranged very easily . . . Well, I dare say he feels that he shouldn't have gone over his head . . . That's it exactly. But, listen. I've got Lake in a pretty good frame of mind regarding the matter, so urge that party to get to him as quickly as possible, understand? . . . Yes, that's the idea. Goodbye.

(Hangs up the receiver and rises.)

The old boy would rather have got that news than a couple of million dollars.

(The door bell rings off R.)

(After a moment's thought.)

If that should be Burke I'd like to see him alone for a few minutes.

(MRS. LAKE rises and exits upstairs C.)

(LAKE crosses to L.)

(McCLELLAN goes to door R., then crosses above table and down L. to above LAKE.)

LAKE

(As he crosses to L.)

I don't know what you think of me, McClellan, but I can't seem to find myself. My mind won't work, that's all.

McCLELLAN

Don't bother about your mind; just get that old heart of yours working.

JAP

(Enters from R.)

A gentleman to see Mrs. Lake.

McCLELLAN

Show him in.

JAP

Yes, sir.
(*Exits R.*)

McCLELLAN

It's Burke all right.
(*LAKE exits L.*)

JAP

(*Enters after a pause, followed by Burke, to Burke.*)
You wait, please, I'll tell Mrs. Lake you're here.

McCLELLAN

Never mind, Maddy, I'll talk to the gentleman.

JAP

Yes, sir.
(*Exits in hallway up C. toward R.*)

BURKE

(*Shows surprise and nervousness as he sees McCLELLAN.*)
Oh, how do you do, Mr. McClellan?

McCLELLAN

(*Crosses below table to BURKE.*)
Hello, Burke, what are you doing here?

BURKE

(*Nervously.*)
Why—I—I heard these people were looking for a chauffeur, so I
—I called to see about the job.

McCLELLAN

Oh, that's it, eh?

BURKE

Yes, sir.

McCLELLAN

(*Moves close to BURKE and looks him squarely in the eyes.*)
You don't say it right, Burke.
(*BURKE makes no reply.*)
(*McCLELLAN shoots the following question at him point-blank.*)
Why did you squeal?

BURKE

(Pauses and thinks.)

What do you mean?

McCLELLAN

You know what I mean. You've turned stool pigeon, have you?

BURKE

(After a pause.)

I don't get you.

McCLELLAN

Yes, you do. Carroll sent you here, didn't he?

BURKE

(Pause.)

Why should Carroll send me here?

McCLELLAN

For identification purposes. Oh, don't play dead: he told me you were working for him.

BURKE

He's a liar.

McCLELLAN

Well, some one's tipped him. Who else besides you knew?

BURKE

(After a pause.)

Carroll's been here?

McCLELLAN

Yes.

BURKE

(After a pause.)

Who is he after?

McCLELLAN

You know who he's after?

BURKE

How should I know?

McCLELLAN

Let me see the message you received.

(BURKE looks at McCLELLAN, but makes no reply.)

The message asking you to come here.

BURKE

I don't get you.

McCLELLAN

Well then, get this. Carroll has stumbled on to the fact that Mrs. Lake is Margaret Case, but he's trying to prove it before he makes the arrest. That's why he fooled you into coming here. He laid a trap for you, and you fell for it like a school boy. Do you get me now?

BURKE

No, I don't know what you mean. I don't know who Mrs. Lake is. I've never seen the lady. As for Margaret Case, she died five years ago. Carroll knows that—I told him all about it.

McCLELLAN

You still imagine I'm trying to double-cross you. Well, I'll prove to you that I'm not.

(Goes upstage C., and touches buzzer.)

You think I'm in with Carroll, don't you?

(Crosses above table and comes downstage L.)

BURKE

In with Carroll!

(Pause.)

No, I wouldn't accuse a cur of that.

JAP

(Enters from hallway up C.)

You ring, sir?

McCLELLAN

Yes. Ask Mrs. Lake to step here, please.

JAP

Yes, sir.

(Exits upstairs C.)

BURKE

(At first is undecided, then shows extreme nervousness, and finally starts for the door.)

Well, I'll go along.

McCLELLAN

No, wait, Burke, you might be of some little help. I wouldn't run away if I were you.

(BURKE stops short; McCLELLAN crosses below table to R.)

Besides, you'll only bump into Carroll when you hit the sidewalk. It's a cinch he's trailed you, or had you trailed. You know how they work as well as I do.

(BURKE looks searchingly at McCLELLAN; then crosses stage and peers out of window upstage L., then comes to L. of table as MRS. LAKE enters.)

(MRS. LAKE enters from upstairs, and comes slowly down to above table C.)

(The JAP follows her downstairs and exits through hallway toward R.)

McCLELLAN

(Up R.)

Mrs. Lake, Mr. Burke is evidently under the impression that I'm in league with the police. Will you please assure him that I'm not.

MRS. LAKE

(Without looking at BURKE.)

Mr. McClellan is doing all he can to assist me.

BURKE

(After a long pause.)

You don't mean that they've—they've really got you?

(MRS. LAKE nods.)

(BURKE sways, then steadies himself.)

Oh, I'm sorry.

(With a real tear in his voice.)

God, how sorry I am!

(LAKE enters from L.)

Mr. McClellan, isn't there some way to stop this persecution? She was no more guilty than you are. They found a ring on her—part of the loot I stole—that's why they sent her away. Why, she thought I was the soul of honor. The blow of the arrest left her without strength enough to tell her own story. She sat like a marble statue all through the trial and never uttered a word in her own defense. She refused to be represented by counsel of any kind, never asked a question or answered one during the whole proceedings—just sat and stared without the wink of an eye. I begged her to take the stand and tell the truth, but she didn't even seem to hear me, just sat

and stared. It's God's truth, I thought she'd gone mad. No man ever made a more bitter fight for a human being than I did, trying to save that girl. I pleaded, and got down on my knees and swore on my mother's soul that she was innocent, but they dragged me from the court and threw me back into the Tombs and told me my word was no good. I was a crook. That's one thing the police will never let a man live down. They've hounded me out of every chance I've had to earn an honest dollar for the last seven years. But I've been straight as a die, because I made up my mind that they'd never take me again, unless it was for murder—and that's what they'll take me for, if Carroll tries to take her.

(Points to MRS. LAKE on the last line, then whirls L. and sees LAKE, who, throughout the speech, has been standing downstage L. The two stand staring at each other for a few moments, MRS. LAKE and McCLELLAN also holding the picture.)

(After a long pause, the door bell rings off R.)

(JAP enters from hallway up R. Is about to exit, when McCLELLAN calls to him.)

McCLELLAN

(To the JAP.)

If that is Mr. Carroll show him right in.

JAP

Yes, sir.

(Exits R.)

McCLELLAN

(Goes upstage to C. door and calls to BURKE.)

Wait in here, Burke, in case it's he. I want to hear what he has to say before he sees you.

(BURKE goes upstage, and exits C. toward R.)

(McCLELLAN turns to MRS. LAKE, who is still above table.)

Keep your nerves together, little woman! He can't arrest you in your own home; that's one point of law in our favor.

CARROLL

(Enters from R., stops short as he sees McCLELLAN, and bows.)

Mr. McClellan.

McCLELLAN

Hello, Carroll.

CARROLL

(Crosses above table to LAKE, who is L.)

I didn't mean to intrude, Mr. Lake. I thought maybe I'd catch you alone. There are one or two things in the Jackson case I forgot to take up with you when I was here today. I thought I'd better get to you quick, so I could go to work on it tomorrow morning.

LAKE

(Coldly.)

All right, Carroll.

CARROLL

(Hesitates as he looks towards MRS. LAKE and McCLELLAN.)

If Mrs. Lake and Mr. McClellan will excuse us for a few minutes, why——

McCLELLAN

(Interrupts.)

Come on, Carroll, say what's in your mind; we're all waiting to hear it. It wasn't the Jackson case that brought you back. Come on, what was it?

CARROLL

(Pauses.)

I'd much rather talk to you alone, Mr. Lake.

LAKE

I've no objections to their hearing whatever you have to say.

CARROLL

(After a pause.)

All right, if that's the way you feel about it, but I'm afraid it's going to be a little embarrassing for all concerned.

(Pauses.)

Mr. Lake, I've a duty to perform. I'm hunting for an escaped criminal. I've good reason to believe that she's in this house. I needn't remind you of the importance of upholding the law. This being your home, it becomes your duty to help me. If you refuse, there is only one alternative—that is, to place this person under arrest the first time she appears on the street.

LAKE

A criminal in this house, you say?

CARROLL

I think so.

LAKE

Whom do you accuse?

CARROLL

(Hesitates.)

'That's rather a delicate question to answer, Mr. Lake. That's why I asked to see you alone.

LAKE

(After a slight pause.)

Go on; I see no necessity for a private interview.

CARROLL

All right, that's up to you. I haven't any right in this house, and if you order me out I'll go without a word of protest, but I thought you'd prefer to have things happen right here rather than at Police Headquarters.

McCLELLAN

Who is it you're after, Carroll? Come on, let's have it.

CARROLL

Margaret Case.

McCLELLAN

The woman you told us of to-day?

CARROLL

Yes.

McCLELLAN

Why should you associate her with anyone here?

CARROLL

I have several reasons, Mr. McClellan. One of them is that this man Burke, that she was convicted with, is hidden somewhere in this house, right now.

McCLELLAN

(Pause.)

I dare say you know what a mistake of this kind will mean to the man who makes it.

CARROLL

I'll take the chance. If I have made a mistake it's the last one I'll ever make. I'll stand ready to apologize and resign from the department—that's how sure I am.

(Turns to LAKE, after a slight pause.)

Have I your permission to ask your wife one or two questions?

LAKE

(Pause.)

Go on.

CARROLL

(Goes up to MRS. LAKE.)

Mrs. Lake, what was your occupation before you were married?

MRS. LAKE

(After a pause, slowly, and with evident effort.)

I was a stenographer.

CARROLL

Thank you.

(Takes a photograph from his pocket and goes to LAKE.)

This is a gallery portrait of Margaret Case taken ten years ago. I think you'll see a striking resemblance.

(Extends the photo to LAKE.)

Do you care to look at it, Mr. Lake?

LAKE

(Coldly.)

No.

CARROLL

(After a slight pause, he turns to MRS. LAKE and extends the photo to her.)

Mrs. Lake?

(She shakes her head negatively.)

Well, then, perhaps Mr. McClellan would like to—

(Starts around table toward MCCLELLAN.)

MCCLELLAN

I don't care to see it, Carroll; I'm not interested.

CARROLL

(Stands looking at the three, then crosses above table and comes down L. to above LAKE.)

The description is on the back; perhaps that will interest you.

(Turns photo over and reads.)

"Name, Margaret Case. Age, nineteen. Height, five feet four and a half inches. Hair, brown. Eyes, blue. Complexion, fair. Occupation, stenographer."

(Stands looking from one to the other.)

McCLELLAN

A description of that kind might fit a million women.

CARROLL

That's true, Mr. McClellan; but I think you'll bear me out when I say that there is one form of identification that never misses fire—finger prints. Mrs. Lake, merely to settle this question one way or the other, would you object if I asked for an impression of your finger tips?

McCLELLAN

(Coldly.)

See here, Carroll, do you mean to accuse Mrs. Lake of being the woman you're after?

CARROLL

(Takes McCLELLAN'S cold tone.)

No; I want her to prove she's not.

(Pause.)

I have a set of Margaret Case's finger prints in my pocket. We can take an impression of Mrs. Lake's in two minutes if she agrees.

McCLELLAN

Well, she's not going to agree to such a humiliating thing.

CARROLL

I want to avoid publicity in this case if it's a possible thing to do. I'm as sorry for the whole affair as any man in my position has a right to be. The arrest of Mrs. Harvey Lake will probably back the war news off the front page, but that's not what I want. Margaret Case is the woman I'm after, and I'm willing to do the thing nice and

quiet, without any sensationalism at all, and unless you make it too hard for me, that's the way it's going to be done.

(Slight pause.)

Mr. Lake, I'm going to ask you a fair question. Is Burke in this house or not?

(LAKE makes no reply.)

(CARROLL looks from one to the other, then goes upstage C., slowly slips his revolver from his hip pocket and shoots toward the floor.)

(LAKE and McCLELLAN start at the explosion. MRS. LAKE screams and rises from her chair terrified.)

(As CARROLL fires, BURKE rushes out from up C. to upstage L.; as he looks R. and sees CARROLL, he realizes that the shot was a trick, and stands dead still.)

(CARROLL puts his gun in his pocket and stands smiling at BURKE.)

I thought that would fetch you.

McCLELLAN

(Indignantly.)

Carroll, this is an outrage!

CARROLL

(Ignores McCLELLAN and directs line at LAKE.)

I apologize, Mr. Lake. It went off by mistake.

(As he crosses to above BURKE, L. C.)

Well, this is a surprise. What brings you here?

(BURKE makes no reply.)

Burke, I'd advise you to answer my questions, and answer them truthfully.

(Points to MRS. LAKE.)

Who is this lady?

BURKE

I don't know.

CARROLL

You've never seen her before?

BURKE

Never.

CARROLL

(Takes photo from pocket and holds it out to BURKE.)

Then perhaps you'll tell me who this is?

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

BURKE

(Takes photo and looks at it.)

I don't know.

CARROLL

The name and descriptions are on the back.

BURKE

Well, then read it yourself and find out who it is.

(Hands photo back to CARROLL.)

CARROLL

(As he takes the photo and puts it in his pocket.)

That kind of stuff won't get you anything with me, Burke. You better keep a civil tongue in your head.

BURKE

Why? You've got no right to grill me. You haven't got anything on me. You haven't been able to get anything on me for the last seven years, though God knows you've tried hard enough.

CARROLL

(Smiles.)

Well, I've got something on you now that will send you away for a longer term than you served the last time.

BURKE

What do you mean?

CARROLL

Blackmail. I've got you dead to rights, Burke. You've been blackmailing Mrs. Lake ever since you found out who she was.

(Uses third degree speed with this to bring a quick answer from BURKE.)

BURKE

(Turns furiously on CARROLL.)

You lie! You dirty, yellow dog, you lie!

(As CARROLL smiles, BURKE realizes the trick.)

CARROLL

(Backs away, smiling.)

I thought I'd get a rise out of you,

LAKE

(*Sternly.*)

I must ask you two men to leave my house.

(BURKE *slinks away and starts for door R., passing below table C.*)

(CARROLL *stands looking down at LAKE.*)

McCLELLAN

Wait a minute, Burke.

(BURKE *stops short, over R.*)

CARROLL

Yes, I wouldn't act hastily if I were you, Mr. Lake. The press isn't represented here—it is at headquarters.

LAKE

It makes no difference. I won't submit to such outrageous methods in my own home. It's got to stop right now.

CARROLL

All right, you can hand it to the public if you want to; I was only trying to make it easy for you.

MRS. LAKE

(*Rises, and cries out despairingly.*)

Oh, I can't, I won't stand it any longer! I'm the woman you're after, Carroll. I'm Margaret Case. For God's sake, take me away and end it all.

BURKE

(*Crosses quickly above table and comes down to L. of MRS. LAKE and just above CARROLL.*)

Don't believe her, Carroll. She doesn't know what she's saying. I tell you Margaret Case died five years ago.

CARROLL

(*With a smile, showing that he admires the man's loyalty.*)

All right, Burke. I've got to hand it to you—you certainly do go through. You won't believe it, but I'm going to tell you just the same; you're all right with me, even though you did call me a yellow dog.

(*X. up BURKE up C.*)

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

McCLELLAN

(To CARROLL.)

Carroll, I suppose you know this means ruin and disgrace for them both.

CARROLL

(Moves above table to R., and above McCLELLAN.)

I'm sorry, Mr. McClellan. It's a rotten job I've got, but I must do my duty. Between the satisfaction of cleaning up my record and a lump in my throat, I've been battling with myself for the past two hours. I didn't even make a report on it, not even to the Chief himself. That's how the whole thing has affected me. I'm not trying to grandstand by telling you this stuff, but now that it's all over I do want you to know that I'm human, even if I am a copper. I'm not going to make any spectacular arrest. Mrs. Harvey Lake need never be known in the affair at all. I only ask that Margaret Case report to me at headquarters within the next twenty-four hours, but I want your word on it. Is that fair enough?

McCLELLAN

Twenty-four hours.

(Crosses L. to BURKE.)

Burke, come in here for a few minutes, will you. I want to talk to you.

*(He and BURKE exit L.)**(LAKE goes upstage to L. of MRS. LAKE.)**(CARROLL stands looking at the LAKES a moment, then starts R.)*

LAKE

Just a minute, Carroll.

(CARROLL comes to R. of table, opposite LAKE.)

Carroll, what's your price?

CARROLL

My price?

LAKE

Yes, the price of your silence. I'll give you a check for whatever amount you name.

CARROLL

They don't write them big enough to buy me, Mr. Lake. As a rule it makes me sore when a man tries to bribe me, but somehow or other I'm sort of glad you made the proposition. It just kind of satisfies me that you feel the way you ought to feel.

MRS. LAKE

It's useless to try any further. Margaret Case will report at Police Headquarters in twenty-four hours.

LAKE

No, no, no!

MRS. LAKE

Yes.

(Rises and exits upstage C. toward L.)

LAKE

Good God! Carroll, there must be some way.

CARROLL

(R. of table; LAKE L. of table.)

I'm sorry, Mr. Lake. I've got to stick on my job and be a real cop until the arrest is made. After that you can call on me to go through any way you want.

JAP

(Enters from R. and announces.)

Mr. Atwood.

(He closes the door and exits upstage C., after ATWOOD and the GOVERNOR have entered.)

ATWOOD

(Enters from R., followed by the GOVERNOR.)

Hello, Lake.

LAKE

(Comes downstage L. to below table C.)

Hello, Mr. Atwood.

ATWOOD

Governor Patterson, Mr. Harvey Lake.

LAKE

(Moves C. to the GOVERNOR, and shakes hands with him.)

This is an honor, Governor.

GOVERNOR

Thank you. It's a great pleasure, Mr. Lake.

LAKE

Won't you be seated?

GOVERNOR

Yes, thanks.

(Moves up R. of table to above it.)

(LAKE moves up L. of table to L. of GOVERNOR.)

ATWOOD

(Sees CARROLL.)

Hello, Carroll. I'm glad you're here.

CARROLL

Mr. Atwood.

ATWOOD

(R.)

This is Detective Carroll, Governor, the man who made the arrest.

GOVERNOR

Oh, how do you do, Carroll?

(Seats himself above table.)

CARROLL

(Embarrassed.)

Governor.

LAKE

Sit down, Carroll.

(CARROLL sits on sofa L., downstage end.)

(LAKE sits L. of the GOVERNOR up L.)

(ATWOOD sits over R., above phone desk.)

GOVERNOR

Mr. Lake, Mr. Carroll, I must ask you both to treat in strictest confidence the fact that I have interested myself in this case. For reasons, political and otherwise, I prefer not to be known in the matter at all. Suffice it to say that this boy's parents are very decent people and have been intimate friends of mine for years. For this reason, more than any other, I don't wish to be mentioned in connection with any influence that is brought forward in the boy's favor.

LAKE

(To CARROLL.)

The Governor refers to the Jackson case.

CARROLL

I knew there was big influence somewhere, Governor, but I didn't know it was up so high.

GOVERNOR

It's a first offense. He's a mere boy, and his mother must be considered. I have come to you to ask you as a personal favor to me, Mr. Lake, to agree not to press the charge, so that the lad may return to his home and his people.

LAKE

All right, Governor, you have my word for it. I will not press the charge.

GOVERNOR

Thank you.

ATWOOD

I said that a word from you would end it all, Governor.

McCLELLAN

(Enters from L.)

Oh, I beg your pardon.

(Bows to the GOVERNOR.)

Governor.

(McCLELLAN moves up back of sofa to head of it.)

GOVERNOR

Mr. McClellan.

(Bows.)

LAKE

(Rises.)

I am going to ask a favor of you, Governor. There is another case which has come to my notice during the past few hours which I am sure is worthy of consideration; the case of a girl convicted, sentenced, and released on probation. She broke her parole, and now, after eight years, she is back here in the State of New York and ready to surrender herself to the authorities. I won't bore you with a detailed account of the case, but I happen to know that she has led an absolutely good life, and that while the circumstances were against her in the trial of ten years ago, there is no doubt in my mind that the girl was absolutely innocent.

GOVERNOR

What was the girl's name?

LAKE

Margaret Case.

GOVERNOR

She has never applied for executive clemency?

LAKE

Never.

GOVERNOR

Any other conviction besides the one you speak of?

LAKE

No, a first offense.

GOVERNOR

Who recommends the pardon?

LAKE

I do.

GOVERNOR

Bring this girl to me to-morrow morning, along with the facts of the case, and I will see that the application is favorably acted upon.

(Rises.)

LAKE

Thank you, Governor.

McCLELLAN

(Moves slightly towards the GOVERNOR.)

It will be the biggest thing you ever did, Governor. If there ever was a deserving case, this is it.

GOVERNOR

I'm only too happy to return the favor to Mr. Lake, and especially glad that the case is one so well recommended.

ATWOOD

(Rises.)

Well, I don't know the girl, but I'd like to sign that application myself.

(*Goes C.*)

Lake, I want the Governor to meet your wife.

LAKE

Why, yes, of course; just a moment.

(*Starts up C.*)

McCLELLAN

(*Stops LAKE.*)

Oh, Lake, Mrs. Lake is resting, you know. She asked not to be disturbed.

(*Warns LAKE with a look.*)

LAKE

Oh, of course, I forgot. Some other time, Governor.

ATWOOD

Oh, I'm so sorry.

GOVERNOR

We must hurry along, Atwood. Goodbye, Lake.

(*ATWOOD goes upstage R.*)

LAKE

(*Shakes hands with the GOVERNOR.*)

Governor. To-morrow morning—at what time?

GOVERNOR

Say, nine o'clock.

LAKE

Right.

GOVERNOR

(*To the others.*)

Goodbye, gentlemen.

(*Starts R.*)

McCLELLAN AND CARROLL

Goodbye, Governor.

ATWOOD

(*Up R. C.*)

I'm dining with the Governor, Mac.

McCLELLAN

(*Over L.*)

I'm going to stay here.

THE HOUSE OF GLASS

CARROLL

Goodbye, Mr. Atwood.

(ATWOOD, the GOVERNOR and LAKE exit R.)

McCLELLAN

Carroll, we've still got twenty-four hours.

CARROLL

I'm clean. I did my duty.

(Points to room L.)

Is Burke in there?

McCLELLAN

Yes.

CARROLL

I want to talk to that bird.

*(Exits L.)**(MRS. LAKE enters from upstage C. She stops and looks at McCLELLAN, then comes down to him with outstretched hands.)*

McCLELLAN

(Takes her hands.)

You heard?

MRS. LAKE

Everything. You've been so wonderful—so big.

McCLELLAN

Big! Now don't get personal; I'm exercising every morning.

*(Laughs.)**(LAKE enters and comes to C., holding out his arms to MRS. LAKE. She goes to him.)*

McCLELLAN

(As LAKE enters he comes down L., opens L. door and laughs.)

Can you beat that? Carroll and Burke are playing a game of billiards.

*(Laughs.)**(MR. and MRS. LAKE are upstage C., clasped in each other's arms.)*

CURTAIN





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